TREATISE

CONCERNING

RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS,

IN THREE PARTS.

PART FIRST.

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE AFFECTIONS, AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN RELIGION.

PART SECOND.

Shewing what are no certain signs that religious affections are gracious, or that they are not:

PART THIRD.

SHEWING WHAT ARE DISTINGUISHING SIGNS OF TRULY GRACIOUS AND HOLY AFFECTIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

HERE is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this, What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favour with God, and intitled to his eternal rewards? or, which comes to the same thing, What is the nature of true religion? and wherein do lie the diffinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness that is acceptable in the fight of God? But though it be of such importance, and tho we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein professing Christians do more differ one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that of our Saviour, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.'

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of: it is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I sirst entered on the study of divinity.—But as to the success of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am fensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature: as it is more difficult to write impartially, so it is more difficult to read impartially.—Many will probably be hurt in their spirits, to find so much that apparents.

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to religious affection, here condemned: and perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others by finding fo much here justified and approved. may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconfistence with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found this has always been objected to by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a hard thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been good and glorious, in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same time to fee the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been had, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am humbly, but fully perfuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, nor go on in a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do There is indeed fomething very mysterious in it, that fo much good, and fo much bad, should be mixed together in the church of God: as it is a mysterious thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the faving grace of God, and the new and divine nature, dwelling in the same heart, with so much corruption, hypocrify, and iniquity, in a particular faint. Yet neither of these, is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new or rare thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail, at a time of great reviving of true religion; and that at fuch a time, multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true faints. It was fo in that great reformation, and revival of religion, that was in Josiah's time; as appears by Jer. iii. 10. and iv. 3, 4. and also by the great apostaly that there was in the land, so soon after his reign. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews, that was in the days of John the Baptist; as appears by the great apostaly of that people, so soon after To general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many; John v. 35. 'Ye were willing for a feason to rejoice in his light.' So it was in

in those great commotions that were among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ; of the many that were then called, but few were chosen; of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching, and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy, but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of the great trials that came afterwards, and endured to the end: many were like the stony ground, or thorny ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good ground. Of the whole heap that was gathered, great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great out-pouring of the Spirit that was in the apostles days; as appears by Matth. xxiv. 10 .-- 13. Gal. iii. 1. and iv. 11, 15. Phili ii. 21. and iii. 18, 19.; and the two epistles to the Corinthians, and many other parts of the New Testament. And fo it was in the great reformation from Popery.-It appears plainly to have been in the visible church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit-trees in the spring; there are a multitude of bloffoms; all which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are but of short continuance, they foon fall off, and never come to maturity.

Not that it is to be supposed that it will always be so; for though there never will, in this world, be an intire purity; either in particular saints, in a persect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the Church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints, and counterseit religion, and salse appearances of grace, with true religion, and real holiness: yet it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the church of God, than has been in ages past; it is plain by these texts of scripture, Is. li. 1. Ezek. xliv. 6, 7, 9. Joel iii. 17. Zech. xiv. 21. Psal. lxix. 32, 35, 36. Is. xxxx.

8, 10. Chap. iv. 3, 4. Ezek. xx. 38. Pfal. xxxvii. 9, 10, 21, 29. And one great reason of it will be, that at that time, God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits; Mal. iii. 3. 'And he shall sit as a resiner and purifier of silver: and he shall surify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.' With ver. 18. which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same happy times, 'Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.'

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not different and diffinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ, all along, hitherto. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivings of religion, that ever have been, fince the first founding of the Christian church. By this, he hurt the cause of Christianity, in, and after the apostolic age, much more than by all the persecutions of both Jews and Heathens: the apostles, in all their epistles, shew themselves much more concerned at the former mischief, than the latter. By this, Satan prevailed against the reformation, begun by Luther, Zuinglius, &c. to put a stop to its progress, and bring it into difgrace; ten times more, than by all those bloody, cruel, and before unheard of persecutions of the church of Rome. By this principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion, that have been in our nation fince the reformation. By this he prevailed against New-England, to quench the love, and spoil the joy of her espousals, about an hundred years ago. I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly that by this the devil has prevailed against the late, great revival of religion in New-England, so happy and promissing in its beginning: here most evidently has been the main advantage Satan has had against us; by this he has foiled us: it is by this means, that the daughter of Zion

Zion in this land, now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wife able to arife; and this, fo quickly after her late great joys and hopes: Lam. i. 174. Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: the Lord hath commanded concerning. ! Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him ! 'Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.? I have seen the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country.- Satan goes on with mankind, as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of paradife, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy paradifaic state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled Eve through his fubtilty, by perverting us from the fimplicity that is in Christ, bath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradifaic state of the church of God in a New England.

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least fensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and do neglect carefully to look all around them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leifure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance...

And fo it is likely ever to be in the church, whenever religion revives remarkably, till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between fa-

ving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shews, and glistering appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the confequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. By this means, the devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing acceptable service to him, that is indeed above all things abominable to him. By this means, he deceives great multitudes about the state of their fouls; making them think they are fomething, when they are nothing; and fo eternally undoes them: and not only fo, but establishes many in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's fight some of the vilest of hypocrites. By this means, he many ways damps and wounds religion in the hearts of the faints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections wofully to degenerate, and fometimes for a confiderable time, to be like the manna, that bred-worms and stank; and dreadfully enfnares and confounds the minds of others of the faints. and brings them into great difficulties and temptation, and entangles them in a wilderness, out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. By this means, Satan mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies of. religion, and strengthens their hands, and fills them with weapons, and makes firong their fortreffes; when, at the same time, religion and the church of God lie exposed to them, as a city without walls. By this means, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness. under a notion of doing God service, and so fin without restraint, yea with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all their might. By this means, he brings in even the friends of religion, infenfibly to themselves, to do. the work of enemies, by destroying religion in a far more effectual manner than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. By this means, the devil fcatters the flock of Christ, and fets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal. for God; and religion by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling ;

jangling; and during the strife, Satan leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and fwayed, till the right path in the middle is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this confusion, the devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government of all into his own hands, and work his own will. And by what is feen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit religion, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unhinged and unfettled, in things of religion, and know not where to fet their foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing at all in religion; and herefy, and infidelity, and atheifm greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavours, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Till this be done, it may be expected, that great revivings of religion will be but of short continuance: till this be done, there is but little good to be expected of all our warm debates, in conversation and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however seeble) endeavours to this end, in the ensuing treatise: wherein it must be noted, that my design is somewhat diverse from the design of what I have formerly published, which was to shew the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God, including both his common and saving operations; but what I aim at now, is to shew the nature and signs of the gracious operations of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever that the minds of men are the subjects of, which are not of a saving nature. If I have

have fucceeded in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have fucceeded to bring any light to this subject, or no, and however my attempt may be reproached, in these captions, censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the acceptance of the fincerity of my endeavours; and hope also, for the candour and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

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PARTI.

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CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE AFFECTIONS, AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN RELIGION.

PETERI. 8.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in autom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

IN these words, the apostle represents the state of the minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the persecutions they were then the subjects of. These persecutions are what he has respect to, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of the trial of their faith, and of their

being in heaviness through manifold temptations.

Such trials are of threefold benefit to true religion. Hereby the truth of it is manifelted, and it appears to be indeed true religion; they, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish between true religion and salse, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of trials, in the verse nextly preceding the text, and in innumerable other places: they try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or no. And the faith of true Christans being thus tried and proved to be true, is 'found to praise, and honour, and glory,' as in that preceding verse.

And then, these trials are of further benefit to true religion; they not only manifest the truth of it, but they make its genuine beauty and amiableness remarkably to appear. True virtue never appears so lovely, as when it

is most oppressed: and the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials: then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold; and upon this account, is 'found to praise, and honour, and glory.'

And again, another benefit that such trials are of to true religion, is, that they purify and encrease it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those mixtures of that which is false, which incumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause theamiableness of true religion to appear to the best advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its lustre and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire, is purged from its alley, and all remainders of drofs, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious, and thus also is 'found unto praise, and honour, and glory.' The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benestes, that perfecutions are of to true religion, in the verse preceding the text.

And in the text, the aposse observes how true religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their perfecutions, whereby these benefits of persecution appeared in them; or what manner of operation of true religion, in them, it was, whereby their religion, under perfecution, was manifested to be true religion, and emimently appeared in the genuine beauty and amiableness
of true religion, and also appeared to be increased and
purified, and so was like to be found unto praise, and
honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'
And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of
true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the
apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these bene-

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1. Love to Christ; 'Whom having not feen, ye love.' The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great fufferings, to forfake the things that were feen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the object of fense. They seemed to the men of the world about them, as though they were befide themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view, that could induce them thus to fuffer, and support them under, and carry them thro' fuch trials. But although there was nothing that was feen, nothing that the world faw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them, yet they had a supernatural principle of love to fomething unfeen; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually whom the world faw not, and whom they themselves had never feen with bodily eyes.

2. Joy in Christ. Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings; and these supported them,

and enabled them to fuffer with chearfulnefs.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, viz. by faith: which is the evidence of things not seen: In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.'—2. The nature of this joy; unspeakable, and full of glory? Unspeakable in the kind of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime, and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so inestably excellent; the sublimity and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. Unspeakable also in degree; it pleasing God to give them this holy joy, with a liberal band, and in large measure, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was full of glory. Although the joy was

unspeakable.

unipeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it, yet something might be said of it, and no words more sit to represent its excellency than these, that it was full of glory; or, as it is in the original, gloristed joy. In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were silled, as it were, with a glorious brightness, and their natures exalted and perfected. It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it: it was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness; it filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made them themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise

from these words is this,

DOCT. True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.

We see that the apossle, in observing and remarking the operations and exercises of religion in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their religion appeared to be true and of the right kind, when it had its greatest trial of what sort it was, being tried by persecution as gold is tried in the fire, and when their religion not only proved true, but was most pure, and cleansed from its dross and mixtures of that which was not true, and when religion appeared in them most in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praise, and honour, and glory; he singles out the religious affections of love and joy that were then in exercise in them: these are the exercises of religion he takes notice of, wherein their religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper glory.

Here I would,

I. Shew what is intended by the affections.

II. Observe some things which make it evident, that a great part of true religion lies in the affections.

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I. It may be inquired, what the affections of the

I answer, The affections are no other, than the more vigorous and fensible exercises of the inclination and will of the foul.

God has endued the foul with two faculties; One is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it difcerns, and views, and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the foul does not merely perceive and view things, but is fome way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined to them, or is difinclined and averse from them: or is the faculty by which the foul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or difliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: it is fometimes called the inclination: and as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the quill: and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the heart.

The exercise of this faculty are of two forts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in approving of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the soul opposes the things that are in view, in disapproving them, and in being displeased with them, averse from

them, and rejecting them.

And as the exercises of the inclination and will of the foul are various in their kinds, so they are much more various in their degrees. There are some exercises of pleasedness ordispleasedness, inclination or disinclination, wherein the soul is carried but a little beyond a state of perfect indifference. And there are other degrees above this, wherein the approbation or dislike, pleasedness or aversion, are stronger; wherein we may rise higher and higher, till the soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the actings of the soul are with that strength, that (through the laws of the union which the Creator has

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fixed between foul and body) the motion of the blood and animal spirits begins to be sensibly altered; whence oftentimes arises some bodily sensation, especially about the heart and vitals, that are the sountain of the sluids of the body: from whence it comes to pass, that the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called the heart. And, it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible exercises of this faculty, that are called the affections.

The will, and the affections of the foul, are not two faculties; the affections are not effentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will, and inclination of the foul, but only in the live-

liness and sensibleness of exercise.

It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a confiderable measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some fense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise any further than it is affected; it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is affected one way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not fo commonly called affections: in every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions: but all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not effentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatfoever, the foul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or difinclined to what is in view: thefe are not effentially different from those affections of love and hatred: that liking or inclination of the foul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the wery lame thing with the affection of love: and that difliking and difinclining, if in a great degree, is the very

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fame with hatred. In every act of the will for, or towards something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of desire. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of joy or delight. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with

the affection of grief or forrow.

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Such feems to be our nature, and fuch the laws of the union of foul and body, that there never is, in any cafe whatfoever, any lively and vigorous exercise of the will or inclination of the foul, without some effect upon the body, in some alteration of the motion of its fluids, and especially of the animal spirits. And, on the other hand, from the same laws of the union of foul and body, the constitution of the body, and the motion of its fluids, may promote the exercise of the affections. But yet it is not the body, but the mind only, that is the proper feat of the affections. The body of man is no more capable of being really the subject of love or hatred, joy or forrow, fear or hope, than the body of atree, or than the same body of man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the foul only that has ideas, so it is the foul only that is pleased or displeased with its ideas. As it is the foul only that thinks, fo it is the foul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these motions of the animal spirits, and fluids of the body, any thing properly belonging to the nature of the affections, though they always accompany them, in the present flate; but are only effects or concomitants of the affections that are entirely distinct from the affections themfelves, and no way effential to them; fo that an unbodied spirit may be as capable of love and hatred, joy or forrow, hope or fear, or other affections, as one that is united to a body.

B. 2

The affections and passions are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet, in the more common use of speech, there is in some respect a difference; and affection is a word, that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than passion, being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but passion for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animal spirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and less in its own command.

As all the exercises of the inclination and will, are either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the affections are of two sorts; they are those by which the soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving to it, or seeking it; or those by which it is averse from it, and opposes it.

Of the former fort are love, defire, hope, joy, gratitude, complacence. Of the latter kind, are hatred, fear, anger, grief, and such like; which it is needless.

now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some affections wherein there is a composition of each of the aforementioned kinds of actings of the will; as in the affection of pity, there is something of the former kind, towards the person suffering, and something of the latter, towards what he suffers. And so in zeal, there is in it high approbation of some person or thing, together with vigorous opposition to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed affections that might be also

mentioned, but I hasten to,

II. The second thing proposed, which was, to obferve some things that render it evident, that true religion, in great part, consists in the affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the nature of the affections makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this matter out of doubt: for who will deny that true religion consists in a great measure, in vigorous and lively actings of the inclination and will of the soul, or the fervent exercises of the heart?

That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not confift in weak, dull, and lifeless wouldings, railing us but a little above a state of indifference : God; in his word, greatly infifts upon it; that we be in good earnest, "fervent in spirit," and our hearts vigorously engaged in religion: Rom. xii. 11. Be ye fervent in fpirit, ferving the Lord.' Deut. x. 12: And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, " and to love him, and to ferve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy foul?" And chap. vi. 4, 5. 'Hear, O Ifrael, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy foul, and with all thy might." It is such a fervent, vigorous engagedness of the heart: in religion; that is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promifes of life; Deut. xxx. 6. And the Lord thy God will circumcife thine heart, and the heart of thy feed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy foul, that thou mayelt live.?"

If we be not in good earnest in religion, and our wills and inclinations be not firongly exercised, we are nothing. The things of religion are so great, that there can be no fuitableness in the exercises of our hearts, to their nature and importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing is vigour in the actings of our inclinations fo requifite, as in religion; and in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place, in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original feat of its Hence true religion is called the power of godliness, in distinction from the external appearances of it; that are the form of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. ' Having a form of god. liness, but denying the power of it. The Spirit of B 3

God, in those that have sound and solid religion, is a spirit of spowerful holy affection; and, therefore, God is said 'to have given them the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,' 2 Tim. i. 7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving influences, are said to be 'baptized with the 'Holy Ghost, and with sire;' by reason of the power and servour of those exercises the Spirit of God excites in their hearts, whereby their hearts, when grace is in exercise, may be said to 'burn within them;' as is said of the disciples, Luke xxiv. 32.

The business of religion is, from time to time, compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to have their hearts and strength greatly exercised and engaged; such as running, wrestling or agonizing for a great prize or crown, and fighting with strong enemies that seek our lives, and warring as those that by violence take a city

or kingdom.

And though true grace has various degrees, and there are some that are but babes in Christ, in whomthe exercise of the inclination and will towards divine and heavenly things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the power of godhness in his heart, has his inclinations and heart exercised towards. God and divine things, with fuch strength and vigour, that these holy exercifes do prevail in him above all carnal or natural affections, and are effectual to overcome them to for every true disciple of Christ, 'loves him above fa-4 ther or mother, wife and children, brethren and fifters, houses and lands; yea, than his own life.' Fromhence it follows, that wherever true religion is, there are vigorous exercises of the inclination and will towards. divine objects: but by what was faid before, the vigorous, lively, and fensible exercises of the will, are no. other than the affections of the foul.

2. The Author of the human nature has not only given affections to men, but has made them very much the fpring of mens actions. As the affections do not only

only necessarily belong to the human nature, but are a very great part of it; so (inasmuch as by regeneration, persons are renewed in the whole man, and sanctified throughout) holy affections do not only necessarily belong to true religion, but are a very great part of that. And as true religion is of a practical nature, and Goda hath so constituted the human nature, that the affections are very much the spring of mens actions, this also shews, that true religion must consist very much in the affections.

Such is man's nature, that he is very unactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, defire, hope, fear, or fome other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men a-going, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits: these are the things that put men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly business; and especially are men excited and animated by these, in allaffairs, wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with vigour. We see the world of mankind to be exceeding buly and active; and the affections. of men are the springs of the motion : take away all love and hatred, all hope and fear, all anger, zeal, and affectionate defire, and the world would be, in a great measure motionless and dead; there would be no such thing as activity amongst mankind, or any earnest purfuit whatfoever. It is affection that engages the covetous man, and him that is greedy of worldly profits, in his pursuits; and it is by the affections, that the ambitious man is put forward in his pursuit of worldly glory; and it is the affections also that actuate the voluptuous man, in his pursuit of pleasure and sensual delights: the world continues, from age to age, in a continual commotion and agitation, in a pursuit of these things; but take away all affection, and the fpring of all this. motion would be gone, and the motion itself would cease. And as in worldly things, worldly affections are very much the fpring of mens motion and action; fo in. religious matters, the spring of their actions are very

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much religious affections: he that has doctrinal knowledge and speculation only, without affection, never is engaged in the business of religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest in fact, than that the things of religion take hold of mens fouls, no further than they affect them. There are multitudes that often hear the word of God, and therein hear of those things: that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard feems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no alteration: in their disposition or behaviour; and the reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious perfections of God, his: almighty power, and boundless wisdom, his infinite majefty, and that holiness of God, by which he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and the heavens are not pure in his fight, and of God's infinite goodness and mercy, and hear of the great works. of God's wisdom, power and goodness, wherein there appear the admirable manifestations of these perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable love of God. and Christ, and of the great things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great things of another world, of eternal misery, in bearing the serceness and wrath of almighty God, and of endless blessedness and glory in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his dear love; they also hear the peremptory commands of God, and his gracious counsels and warnings, and the sweet invitations of the gospel; I say, they often hear these things, and yet remain as they were before, with no fensible alteration on them, either in heart or practice, becaufe they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be so till they are affected. I am bold to affert, that there never was any confiderable change wrought in : the mind or conversation of any one person, by any thing of a religious nature, that ever he read, heard, or faw, that had not his affections moved. Never was a

natural man engaged earnestly to feek his salvation: never were any such brought to cry after wisdom, and lift up their voice for understanding, and to wrestle with God in prayer for mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own unworthiness and deservings of God's displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for refuge unto Christ, while his heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a faint awakened out of a cold, lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected. And, in a word, there never was any thing confiderable brought to pass in the heart or life of any man living, by the things of religion, that had not his. heart deeply affected by those things.

4. The holy feriptures do every where place religion very much in the affections; such as fear, hope, love, hatred, desire, joy, sorrow, gratitude, compassion, and zeal.

The scriptures place much of religion in godly sear; insomuch, that it is often spoken of as the character of those that are truly religious persons, that they tremble at God's word, that they sear before him, that their slesh trembles for fear of him, and that they are asraid of his judgments, that his excellency makes them asraid, and his dread falls upon them, and the like: and a compellation commonly given the saints in scripture, is, fearers of God, or 'they that fear the Lord.' And because the sear of God is a great part of true godliness, hence true godliness in general, is very commonly called by the name of the sear of God; as every one knows, that knows any thing of the Bible.

So hope in God and in the promises of his word, is often spoken of in the scripture, as a very considerable part of true religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great things of which religion consists, I Cor. xiii.

13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as

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the character of the faints: Pfal. cxlvi. 5. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.' Jer. xvii. 7. 'Bleffed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.' Pfal. xxxi. 24. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. And the like in many other. places. Religious fear and hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the character of the true faints; Pfal. xxxiii. 18. 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.' Pfal. cxlvii. 11. 'The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.' Hope is so great a part of true religion, that the apostle says, 'we are saved by hope,' Rom. viii. 24. And this is spoken of as the helmet of the Christian foldier, 1 Thest. v. 8. 'And. for an helmet, the hope of falvation; and the fure and fledfalt anchor of the foul, which preferves it from being cast away by the storms of this evil world, Heb. vi. 19. . Which hope we have as an anchor of the foul, both. fure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.' It is spoken of as a great fruit and bepefit which true faints receive by Christ's refurrection, 1 Pet. i. 3. Bleffed be the God and Father of our Lord Jefus Chrift, which, according to his abundant: e mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the refurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The scriptures place religion very much in the affection of love, in love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to the people of God, and to mankind. The texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary affection of hatred also, as having sin for its object, is spoken of in scripture as no inconsiderable part of true religion. It is spoken of as that by which true religion may be known and distinguished, Prov. viii. 13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.

And

And accordingly the saints are called upon to give evidence of their sincerity by this, Psal. xcvii. 10. 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' And the Psalmist often mentions it as an evidence of his sincerity; Psal. ci. 2, 3. 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: 'I hate the work of them that turn aside.' Psal. cxix. 104. 'I hate every salse way.' So ver. 128. Again, Psal. cxxxix. 21. 'Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?'

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So holy defire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in scripture as an important part of true religion; Ifa. xxvi. 8. ' The defire of our foul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.' Pfal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I defired of the Lord, and that will I feek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and ' to inquire in his temple.' Pfal. xlii. 1, 2. ' As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, fo panteth my foul after thee, O God; my foul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Pfal. lxiii. 1, 2. 'My foul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thir-4 sty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' Plal. exxiv. 1, 2. 4 How amiable are thy tabernacles, Q Lord of hofts! My foul longeth, yea, even fainteth ' for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh " crieth out for the living God.' Pfal. cxix. 20. 'My " foul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy ' judgments at all times.' So Pfal. Ixxiii. 25. and cxliii. 6, 7. and cxxx. 6. Cant. iii. 1, 2. and vi. 8. Such a holy defire and thirst of soul is mentioned, as one of those great things which renders or denotes a man truly bleffed, in the beginning of Christ's fermon on the mount, Matth. v. 6. 'Bleffed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. And this holy thirst is spoken of, as a great thing in the condition

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condition of a participation of the bleffings of eternal life, Rev. xxi. 6. 'I will give unto him that is athirft,

of the fountain of the water of life freely.

The scriptures speak of holy joy, as a great part of true religion. So it is represented in the text. And as an important part of religion, it is often exhorted to; and preffed, with great earnestness; Pfal. xxxvii. 4. Delight thyfelf in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Pfal. xcvii, 12. Re-' joice in the Lord, ye righteous.' So Pfal. xxxiii. 1. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.' Matth. v. 12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.' Phil, iii. 1. ' Final-1 ly, brethren, rejoice in the Lord.' And chap. iv. 4. * Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again, I fay, Rejoice.' Theff. v. 16. 'Rejoice evermove.' Pfal. cxlix. 2. Let Ifrael rejoice in him that made him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King,' This is mentioned among the principal fruits of the Spirit of grace, Gal. v. 22. ' The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,' &c .-The Pfalmist mentions his holy joy, as an evidence of his fincerity. Pfal. cxix. 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Religious forrow, mourning, and brokenness of heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great part of true religion. These things are often mentioned as distinguishing qualities of the true faints, and a great part of their character; Matth v. 4. Bleffed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.' Pfal. xxxiv. 18. 'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart: and faveth fuch as be of a contrite spirit." Ifa. lxi. 1, 2. ' The Lord hath anointed me-to bind up the broken-hearted,-to comfort all that mourn.' This godly forrow and brokenness of heart is often spoken of, not only as a great thing in the diffinguishing character of the faints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleafing to God; Pfal. li. 17. The facri-· fices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a con-* trite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Isa. lvii. 15.

Thus faith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth

eternity,

eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and

'humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' Chap. lxvi.
2. 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor

and of a contrite spirit.'

Another affection often mentioned, as that in the exercise of which much of true religion appears, is gratitude; especially as exercised in thankfulness and praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the book of Psalms, and other parts of the holy scriptures, I need

not mention particular texts.

Again, the holy scriptures do frequently speak of compassion or mercy, as a very great and effential thing in true religion; infomuch that good men are in scripture denominated from hence; and a merciful man, and a good man, are equivalent terms in scripture, Isa. lvii. 1. 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away.' And the scripture chooses out this quality, as that by which, in a peculiar manner, a righteous man is decyphered; Pfal. xxxvii. 21. 'The righteous sheweth mercy, and gi-' veth;' and ver. 26. 'He is ever merciful, and lendeth.' And Prov. xiv. 31. 'He that honoureth the Lord, hath mercy on the poor.' And Col. iii. 12. ' Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,' bowels of mercies, &c. This is one of those great things, by which those who are truly blessed are described by our Saviour, Matth. v. 7. 'Bleffed are the merciful, for ' they shall obtain mercy.' And this Christ also speaks of, as one of the weightier matters of the law, Marth. xxiii. 23. ' Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cum-' min, and have omitted the weightier matters of the ' law, judgment, mercy, and faith.' To the like purpose is that, Mic. vi. 8. ' He hath shewed thee, O ' man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?' And also that, Hos. vi. 6.

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For I desired mercy, and not facrifice. Which seems to have been a text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his manner of citing it once and again, Matth. ix. 13.

and xii. 7.

Zeal is also spoken of, as a very effential part of the religion of true faints. It is spoken of as a great thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our redemption, Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And this is spoken of, as the great thing wanting in the luke-warm Laodiceans, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the scripture, which place religion very much in the affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to shew that they who would deny that much of true religion lies in the affections, and maintain the contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other rule, by which to judge of the nature of religion.

5. The scriptures do represent true religion, as being summarily comprehended in love, the chief of the affec-

tions, and fountain of all other affections.

So our bleffed Saviour represents the matter, in anfwer to the lawyer, who asked him, which was the great commandment of the law, Matth. xxii. 37 .- 40. 'Jefus faid unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy foul, and with all 4 thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy a neighbour as thyfelf. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' Which last words fignify as much, as that thefe two commandments comprehend all the duty preferibed, and the religion taught in the law and the prophets. And the apostle Paul does from time to time make the fame reprefentation of the matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8. ' He that lowith another, hath fulfilled the law.' And ver. 10. Love

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' So likewise in 1 Tim. i. 5. 'Now the end of the command- ment is charity, out of a pure heart,' &c. So the same apostle speaks of love, as the greatest thing in religion, and as the witals, essence and soul of it; without which, the greatest knowledge and gifts, and the most glaring profession, and every thing else which appertains to religion, are vain and worthless; and represents it as the sountain from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 Cor. xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered charity, in the original is ayarn the proper English of which is love.

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Now, although it be true, that the love thus spoken of, includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent propensity of the soul, towards God and man; yet it may be considered, that it is evident from what has been before observed, that this propensity or inclination of the soul, when in sensible and vigorous exercise, becomes affection, and is no other than affectionate love. And surely it is such vigorous and servent love which Christ speaks of, as the sum of all religion, when he speaks of loving God with all our hearts, with all our souls, and with all our minds, and our neighbour as ourselves, as the sum of all that was taught and prescribed in the law and the prophets.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is here, and in other scriptures, spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, exclusive of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from these scriptures, that the essence of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affection, and an habitual disposition to it, and that light which is the soundation of it, and those things which are the fruits of it,

confifts the whole of religion.

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From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion consists in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of the affections, and the fountain of all the affections. From love arises hatred of those things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those things that we delight in: and from the various exercises of love and hatred, according to the circumstances of the objects of these affections, as prefent or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, arife all those other affections of desire, hope, fear, joy, grief, gratitude, anger, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent love to God, will necessarily arife other religious affections; hence will arife an intense hatred and abhorrence of fin, fear of fin, and a dread of God's displeasure, gratitude to God for his goodness, complacence and joy in God when God is graciously and fensibly present, and grief when he is abfent, and a joyful hope when a future enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent zeal for the glory of God. And in like manner, from a fervent love to men, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men.

6. The religion of the most eminent faints we have an account of in the scripture, consisted much in holy affections.

I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, which have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, and so described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, that are a part of the facred canon.

The first instance I shall take notice of, is David, that 'man after God's own heart;' who has given us. a lively portraiture of his religion in the Book of Pfalms. Those holy fongs of his he has there left us, are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy affections; fuch as an humble and fervent love to God, admiration of his glorious perfections and won-

derful works, earnest defires, thirstings, and pantings of foul after God, delight and joy in God, a sweet and melting gratitude to God for his great goodness, an holy exultation and triumph of foul in the favour, fufficiency, and faithfulness of God, his love to, and delight in the faints the excelent of the earth, his great delight in the word and ordinances of God, his grief for his own and others fins, and his fervent zeal for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection, which the plalms of David are every where full of, are the more to our present purpose, because those plalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a faint, that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were: alfo, by the direction of the Holy Choft, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all faints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the Pfalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the Psalmist of Israel as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worthin and praises; and in many of the plalms, speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affection; and in many other pfalms, he fpeaks in the name of the church.

Another instance I shall observe, is the apostle Paul; who was, in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and made the chief instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian church in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious mysteries of the gospel, for the instruction of the church in all ages; and (as has not been improbably thought by some) the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived, received to the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the scripture, he appears to have been a person that was full of assection.

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And it is very manifest, that the religion he expresses in his epiftles, confifted very much in holy affections. It appears by all his expressions of himself, that he was, in the course of his life, inflamed, actuated, and entirely fwallowed up, by a most ardent love to his glorious Lord, esteeming all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win him. He represents himself, as overpowered by this holy affection; and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his fervice, through all difficulties and fufferings, 2 Cor. v. 14. 15. And his epiftles are full of expressions of an overflowing affection towards the people of Christ: he speaks of his dear love to them, 2 Cor. xii. 19. Phil. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 2.; of his 'abundant love,' 2 Cor. ii. 4.; and of his 'affectionate and tender love,' as of a nurse towards her children, 1 Thest. ii. 7. 8. ' But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so, being affectionately defirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own fouls, because ye were dear unto us.' So also he speaks of his 'bowels of love,' Phil. i. 8. Philem. 5. 12. and 20. So he speaks of his 'earnest care for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16. and of his bowels of pity, or mercy, towards them, Phil. ii. 1.; and of his concern for others, even to anguish of heart, 2 Cor. ii. 4. ' For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.' He speaks of the great conflict of his four for them, Col. ii. 1. He fpeaks of great-and continual grief that he had in his heart from compassion to the Jews, Rom. ix. 2. He speaks of ' his 4 month's being opened, and his heart enlarged' towards Christians, 2 Cor. vi. 11. 'O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.'. He often speaks of his 'affectionate and longing desires,' 1 Thess. ii. 8. Rom. i. 11. Phil. i. 8. and Chap. iv. 1. 2 Tim. i. 4. The same apostle is very often, in his epiltles,

epiftles, expressing the affection of joy, 2 Cor. i. 12. and Chap. vii. 7. and ver. 9. 16. Phil. i. 4. and Chap. ii. 12. and Chap. iii. 3. Col. 1. 24. 1 Theff. iii. 9. He speaks of his 'rejoicing with great joy,' Phil. iv. 10. Philem. 1. 7.; of his 'joying and rejoicing,' Phil. ii. 1. 7. and of his rejoicing exceedingly,' 2 Cor. vii. 13. and of his being 'filled with comfort, and being exceeding joyful,' 2 Cor. vii. 4. He speaks of himself as 'always rejoicing, 2 Cor. vi. 10. So he speaks of the triumphs of his foul, 2 Cor. ii. 14. and of 'his glorying in tribulation,' 2 Theff. i. 4. and Rom. v. 3. He also expresses the affection of hope; in Phil. i. 20. he speaks of his earnest expectation, and his hope.' He likewise expresses an affection of godly jealoufy, 2 Cor. xi. 2. 3. And it appears by his whole history, after his converfion, in the Acts, and also by all his epistles, and the accounts he gives of himself there, that the affection of zeal, as having the cause of his Master, and the interest and prosperity of his church, for its object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his heart, strongly engaging to those great and constant labours he went through, in instructing, exhorting, warning, and reproving others, travailing in birth with them; conflicting with those powerful and innumerable enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with principalities and powers, not fighting as one who beats the air, running the race fet before him, continually pressing forwards through all manner of difficulties and fufferings; so that others thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of affection, does further appear by his being fo full of tears: in 2 Cor. ii. 4. he speaks of his 'many tears;' and fo Acts xx. 19.; and of his ' tears that he shed con-'tinually night and day,' ver. 31.

Now if any one can consider these accounts given in the scripture of this great apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his religion consisted much in affection, must have a strange faculty of managing his eyes, to shut out the light which shines most full in his

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The other instance I shall mention, is of the apostle John, that beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest privileges of any of them; being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raifing of Jairus's daughter, and whom he took. with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three fpoken of by the apostle Paul, as the three main pillars of: the Christian church; but was favoured above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom, at his last Supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensations towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the Book of Revelation; and to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the Christian church, after their death.

It is evident by all his writings, (as is generally obferved by divines), that he was a person remarkably full of affection: his addresses to those whom he wrote to, being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless

we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God fent into the world, to be the light of the world, and head of the whole church, and the perfect example of true religion and virtue, for the imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole flock fhould follow where-ever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a perfon who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate heart; and his virtue was expressed very much in the exercise of holy affections. He was the greatest instance of ardency, vigour and strength of love, to both God and man, that ever was. It was these affections which got the victory, in that mighty struggle

struggle and conslict of his affections, in his agonies, when 'he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears,' and wrestled in tears and in blood. Such was the power of the exercises of his holy love. that they were stronger than death, and in that great struggle, overcame those strong exercises of the natural affections of fear and grief, when he was fore amazed, and his foul was exceeding forrowful, even unto death. And he also appeared to be full of affection, in the course of his life. We read of his great zeal, fufilling that in the 69th Pfalm, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up,' John ii. 17. We read of his grief for the fins of men, Mark iii. 5. 'He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts; and his breaking forth in tears and exclamations, from the confideration of the fin and mifery of ungodly men, and on the fight of the city of Jerusalem, which was full of such inhabitants, Luke xix. 41, 42. 'And, when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, faying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid ' from thine eyes.' With Chap. xiii. 34. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are fent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth e gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? We read of Christ's earnest desire, Luke xxii. 15. With desire have I desired to eat this passover with 'you before I suffer.' We often read of the affection. of pity or compassion in Christ, Matth. xv. 32. and xviii. 34. Luke vii. 13. and of his ' being moved with compassion,' Matth. ix. 36. and xiv. 14. and Mark vi, 34. And how tender did his heart appear to be, on occasion of Mary's and Martha's mourning for their brother, and coming to him with their complaints and tears? their tears foon drew tears from his eyes; he was affected with their grief, and wept with them; though he knew their forrow should so soon be turned into joy, by their brother's

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brother's being raifed from the dead; fee John xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying difcourfe, which Jesus had with his eleven disciples the evening before he was crucified; when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great difficulties and fufferings they should meet with in the world, when he was gone; and comforted and counfelled them, as his dear little children; and bequeathed to them his Holy Spirit, and therein his peace, and his comfort and joy, as it were in his last will and testament, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John; and concluded the whole with that effectionate interceffory prayer for them, and his whole church, in chap. xvii. Of all the discourses ever penned, or uttered by the mouth of any man, this feems to be the most affectionate, and affecting.

8. The religion of heaven confilts very much in af-

There is doubtless true religion in heaven, and true religion in its utmost purity and perfection. But according to the scripture representation of the heavenly state, the religion of heaven confists chiefly in holy and mighty love and joy, and the expression of these in most fervent and exalted praises. So that the religion of the faints in heaven, consists in the same things with that religion of the faints on earth, which is spoken of in our text, viz. love, and ' joy unspeakable, and full of e glory.' Now, it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the faints in heaven be not united to flesh and blood, and have no animal fluids to be moved (through the laws of union of foul and body) with those great emotions of their fouls, that therefore their exceeding love and joy are no affections .- We are not speaking of the affections of the body, but of the affections of the foul, the chief of which are love and joy. When these are in the foul, whether that be in the body or out of it, the foul is affected and moved. And when they are in the loul, in that strength in which they are

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in the faints in heaven, the foul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same thing, has great affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what love and joy are in a foul out of a body, or in a glorified body; i. e. we have not had experience of love and joy in a foul in these circumstances; but the saints on earth do know what divine love and joy in the foul are, and they know what love and joy are of the same kind with the love and joy which are in heaven, in separate fouls there. The love and joy of the faints on earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and bleffedness of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the same in pature, though not the fame with it, or like to it, in degree and circumstances. This is evident by many scriptures, as Prov. iv. 18. John iv. 14. and chap. vi. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58. 1 John iii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 8,—12. It is unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the love and joy of the faints in heaven, not only differ in degree and circumstances, from the holy love and joy of the faints on earth, but is so entirely different in nature, that they are no affections; and merely because they have no blood and animal spirits to be set in motion by them, which motion of the blood and animal spirits is not of the effence of these affections, in men on the earth, but the effect of them; although by their re-action they may make fome circumstantial difference in the sensation of the mind. There is a fensation of the mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any effects on the fluids of the body; and this fensation of the mind, therefore, does not depend on these motions in the body, and so may be in the foul without the body. And where-ever there are the exercises of love and joy, there is that senfation of the mind, whether it be in the body, or out; and that inward fensation, or kind of spiritual sense, or feeling, and motion of the foul, is what is called affection: the foul when it thus feels, (if I may fo fay), and is thus moved, is faid to be affected, and especially when this inward sensation and motion are to a very high de-

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gree, as they are in the faints in heaven. If we can learn any thing of the state of heaven from the scripture, the love and joy that the saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the heart with the strongest and most lively sensation of inexpressible sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a slame of sire. And if such love and joy be not affections, then the word affection is of no use in language.—Will any say, that the saints in heaven, in beholding the sace of their Father, and the glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful works, and particularly his laying down his life for them, have their hearts nothing moved and affected

by all which they behold or confider?

Hence, therefore, the religion of heaven, confisting chiefly in holy love and joy, confifts very much in affection: and, therefore, undoubtedly, true religion confifts very much in affection. The way to learn the true nature of any thing, is to go where that thing is to be found in its purity and perfection. If we would know the nature of true gold, we must view it, not in the ore. but when it is refined. If we would learn what true religion is, we must go where there is true religion, and nothing but true religion, and in its highest perfection, without any defect or mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this world, they are strangers here, and belong to heaven; they are born from above, heaven is their native country, and the nature which they receive by this heavenly birth, is an heavenly nature, they receive an anointing from above; that principle of true religion which is in them, is a communication of the religion of heaven; their grace is the dawn of glory; and God fits them for that world by conforming them to it.

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^{9.} This appears from the nature and design of the ordinances and duties, which God hath appointed, as means and expressions of true religion.

To instance in the duty of prayer: It is manifest, we are not appointed, in this duty, to declare God's perfections, his majesty, holiness, goodness, and all-sussiciency, and our own meanness, emptiness, dependence, and unworthiness, and our wants and desires, to inform God of these things, or to incline his heart, and prevail with him to be willing to shew us mercy; but suitably to affect our own hearts with the things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the blessings we ask. And such gestures, and manner of external behaviour in the worship of God, which custom has made to be significations of humility and reverence, can be of no further use, than as they have some tendency to affect our own hearts, or the hearts of others.

And the duty of finging praises to God seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections. No other reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in verse, rather than in prose, and do it with music, but only, that such is our nature and frame, that these things have a tendency to move

our affections.

The fame thing appears in the nature and defign of the facraments, which God hath appointed. God confidering our frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great things of the gospel, and of the redemption of Christ, and instructed in them by his word; but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our view, in sensible representations, in the facra-

ments, the more to affect us with them,

And the impressing divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained, that his word delivered in the holy scriptures, should be opened, applied, and fet home upon men, in preaching. And therefore it does not answer the aim which God had in this institution, merely for men to have good commentaries and expositions on the scripture, and other good books of divinity; because, although these may tend, as well as preaching, to give men a good doctrinal, or speculative and careful and ing.

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understanding, of the things of the word of God, yet they have not an equal tendency to impress them on mens hearts and affections. God hath appointed a particular, and lively application of his word to men, in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect finners with the importance of the things of religion, and their own mifery, and necessity of a remedy, and the glory and fufficiency of a remedy provided; and to stir up the pure minds of the faints, and quicken their affections, by often bringing the great things of religion to their remembrance, and fetting them before them in their proper colours, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already, 2 Pet. i. 12. 13. And particularly, to promote those two affections in them, which are spoken of in the text, love and jay: 'Christ gave some, apostles: and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; that the body of Christ might be edified in love,' Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. The apostle, in instructing and counselling Timothy, concerning the work of the ministry, informs him, that the great end of that word which a minister is to preach, is love or charity, 1 Tim. i. 3, 4, 5. And another affection which God has appointed preaching as a means to promote in the faints, is joy; and therefore ministers are called 'helpers of their joy,' 2 Cornica4. primate Abr Manifel person bill and if a

of heart, lies very much in the affection of the heart, that the scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in hardness of heart. Thus the scriptures do every where. It was hardness of heart which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the Jews, Mark iii. 5.

He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. It is from meas having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves; Rom. ii. 5. After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the right-

eons judgment of God.' The reason given why the house of Israel would not obey God, was, that they were hard-hearted; Ezek. in. 7. But the house of "Ifrael will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me : for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted. The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is afcribed to the hardness of their hearts; Pfal. xcv. 7 .-To-day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wildernels; when your fathers tempted me, proved me; and faw my work : forty vears long was I grieved with this generation, and faid, It is a people that do err in their heart, &c .--This is spoken of as what prevented Zedekiah's turning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Ifrael. This principle is spoken of, as that from whence men are without the fear of God, and depart from God's ways: Ifa. Ixiii. 17. O Lord, why haft thou made us to err from thy ways? and hardened our heart from thy fear?' And mens rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this principle; Acts xix. o. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude.'-God's leaving men to the power of the fin and corruption of the heart, is often exprefied by God's hardening their hearts; Rom. ix. 18. Therefore hath he mercy, on whom he will have nercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth. John xii. 40. He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their " hearts.' And the apostle seems to speak of 'an evil heart, that departs from the living God, and a hard heart, as the same thing, Heb. in. 8. Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, &cc. ver. 12, 13. · Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the hving God: but exhort one another daily while it is called "To-day; left any of you be hardened through the · deceitfulness.

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deceitfulness of sin.' And that great work of God. in convertion, which confilts in delivering a person from the power of fin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's taking away the heart; of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, Ezek. xi. 19.

and chap. xxxvi. 26. seeks anson as granquet as June

Now, by a hard heart, is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not eafy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a stone, infensible, stupid, unmoved, and hard to be impressed. Hence the hard heart is called a flony heart, and is opposed to an heart of flesh, that has feeling, and is fensibly touched and moved. We read in foripture of a hard heart, and a tender heart : and do ubtless we are to understand these, as contrary, the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends Josiah, because his heart was tender: and it is evident by those things which are mentioned as expressions and evidences of this tenderness of heart, that by his heart being tender is meant, his heart being eafily moved with religious and pious affection; 2 Kings xxii. 10. Because thine heart was tender. and thou half humbled thyfelf before the Lord, when thou heardst what I spake against this place, and ae gainst the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me, I also have heard thee, faith the Lord.' And this is one thing, wherein itis necessary we should become as little children, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God,' even. that we should have our hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in some places, in the texts themselves, that by hardness of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So, to fignify the offrich's being without natural affection to her young, it is faid, Job xxxix. 16. She hardeneth her heart against her young ones, as s though they were not hers.' So a person having a

Beart unaffected in time of danger, is expressed by his bardening his heart, Prov. xxviii. 14. 'Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his

heart, shall fall into mischief."

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Now therefore fince it is so plain, that by a hard heart, in scripture, is meant a heart destitute of pious affections, and since also the scriptures do so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart; it is evident, that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must, in a great measure, consult in its having pious affections, and being easily sufceptive of such affection. Divines are generally agreed, that sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its root and soundation in a privation or want of holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be so that sin does very much consist in hardness of heart, and so in the want of pious affections of heart, holiness does consist very much in those pious affections.

I am far from supposing that all affections do shew a tender heart: hatred, anger, vain-glory, and other selfs sh and self-exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest heart. But yet it is evident, that hardness of heart, and tenderness of heart, are expressions that relate to the affections of the heart, and denote the heart's being susceptible of, or shut up against, certain affections; of which I shall have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly existent, that true religion has very much in the affections. Not that I think these arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection, and present emotion of the mind: for undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true saints which is not spiritual; their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their seat in the body, yet the constitution of the bedy may very much contribute to the present emotion

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of the mind. And the degree of religion is rather to be judged of by the fixedness and strength of the habit that is exercised in affection, whereby hely affection is habitual, than by the degree of the present exercise and the strength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifestations, or inward effects, in the hurry and vehemence, and sudden changes of the course of the thoughts of the mind. But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion: and notight in the understanding so good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart: no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise: and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.

Having thus considered the evidence of the proposition laid down, I proceed to some inferences.

who are for discarding all religious affections, as having:

nothing folid or fubftantial in them.

There feems to be too much of a disposition this way, prevailing in this land at this time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary leason, appeared to have great religious affections, did not manifest a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the time of their affection, and the heat of their zeal; and because the high affections of many feem to be fo foon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed with joy and zeal, for a while, feem to have returned like the dog to his vomit: hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit with great numbers; as though true religion did not at all confift in them. Thus we eafly and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme; there was a prevalent disposition to look upon all high religious affections as eminent exercifes of true grace, without much inquiring into the nature

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nature and fource of those affections, and the manner in which they arose: if persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raifed, so as to be full of religious talk, and express themselves with great warmth and earnestness, and to be filled, or to be very full, as the phrases were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude such persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which. was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, instead of esteeming and admiring all religious affections without distinction, it is a thing much more prevalent, to reject and discard all without distinction. Herein. appears the subtilty of Satan. While he saw that affections were much in vogue, knowing the greater part of the land were not verfed in fuch things, and had not had much experience of great religious affections to enable them to judge well of them, and diffinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best. play his game, by fowing tares amongst the wheat, and mingling false affections with the works of God's Spirit; he knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many fouls, and greatly to wound religion in the faints, and entangle them in a dreadful wildernels, and by and by, to bring all religion into difrepute. But now, when the ill consequences of these false affections appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those emotions, which made a glaring shew, and were by many greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the devil fees it to be for his interest to go another way to work, and to endeavour to his utmost to propagate and oftablish a persuasion, that all affections and sensible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually shut out the power of godliness, and every thing which is spiritnal, and to have all true Christianity turned out of

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doors. For although to true religion there must indeed be something else besides affection; yet true religion confilts fo much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a state of spiritual death, and is. wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, faving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As thereis no true religion where there is nothing else but affection, to there is no true religion where there is no religious affection. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an affected fervent heart; where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart: so on the other hand; where there is a kind of light without: heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual: knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. The reason why men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of, in the word of God, is undoubtedly because they are blind; if they were not: fo, it would be impossible, and utterly inconsistent with human nature, that their hearts should be otherwise, than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such things.

This manner of flighting all religious affections, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their stupidity and senselesses, and to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring them at last to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice against religious affections at this day, in the land, is apparently of awful effect, to harden the hearts of sinners, and damp the graces of many of the saints, and stand the life and power of religion, and preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a state of dulases and apathy, and undoubtedly causes many persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining

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mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work hehas lately wrought in this land.

And for persons to despise and cry down all religious affections, is the way to that all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their who the cetture of the donerals enthermes, lash selved

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They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high affections themselves. And let it be confidered, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion. And they who condemn others for their religious affections, and have none themselves, have no religion.

There are false affections, and there are true. A man's having much affection, does not prove that he has any true religion: but if he has no affection, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not toreject all affections, nor to approve all; but to diftinguish between affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the drofs, the precious and the vile. euro say trootsodurt sexte

2. If it be so, that true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may infer, that such means are to be defired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and fuch a way of preaching the word, and administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer, and singing praises, is much to be defired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means.

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Such a kind of means would formerly have been highly approved of, and applauded by the generality of the people of the land, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace. But the prevailing taffe feems of late strangely to be altered: that pathetical manner of praying and preaching, which would former. ly have been admired and extolled, and that for this reason, because it had such a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites dif-

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Perhaps, formerly the generality (at least of the common people) were in the extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate address, in public performances: but now, a very great part of the people feem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there may be such means, as may have a great tendency to stir up the passions of weak and ignorant persons, and yet have no great tendency to benefit their fouls: for though they may have a tendency to excite affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious affections, or any affections tending to grace. But undoubtedly, if the things of religion, in the means used, are treated according to their nature, and exhibited truly, fo as tends to convey just apprehensions, and a right judgement of them; the more they have a tendency to move the affections, the better. when shorted and to salteness and

3. If true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been faid, that this arifes from our having fo

little true religion. The disher out allogical and had shorted

God has given to mankind affections, for the fame purpole which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human foul for, viz. that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is, the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engal ged in other matters, than in religion ! In things which concern mens worldly interest, their outward delights, their honour and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their defires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in thefe things their hearts are tender and fenfible, eafily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with

grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly fuccesses and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men about the great things of another world! how dull are their affections! how heat vy and hard their hearts in these matters! here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. How they can fit and hear of the infinite height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jefus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a facrifice for the fins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the finnocent, holy, and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody fweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deferved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, infensible, and regardless! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? what is it that does more require them? and what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not fuch an one as this? can any thing be fet in our view, greater and more important? any thing more wonderful and furprising?-or more nearly concerning our interest? Can we suppose the wife Creator implanted such principles in the human nature as the affections, to be of use to us, and to be exercised on certain proper occafions, but to lie still on such an occasion as this? can any Christian, who believes the truth of these things, entertain fuch thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human nature in making these principles a part of it, when they are vain and useless; then they ought to be exercised about those objects which are most worthy of them.

But is there any thing, which Christians can find in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earnest and longing desires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as those things that are held forth to us in the gospel of Iesus

Jesus Christ? in which, not only are things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the bleffed Jehovah, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibit. ed in the most affecting manner that can be conceived of, as it appears, thining in all its lustre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compaffionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love and compassion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the most tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greatest trial, and their highest exercise, and so their brightest manifestation, when he was in the most affecting circum-Rances; even when he was under his last sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled sufferings, he endured, from his tender love and pity to us. There alfo, the hateful nature of our fins is manifested in the most affecting manner possible; as we see the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to an-Iwer for us, fuffered for them. And there we have the most affecting manifestations of God's hatred of fin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his suffice in the strictness and inflexibleness of it, and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our fins, in one who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though every thing were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most fensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the duft, that we are no more affected!

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SHEWING WHAT ARE NO CERTAIN SIGNS THAT RELI-GIOUS AFFECTIONS ARE TRULY GRACIOUS, OR THAT, THEY ARE NOT.

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Control of the party of the second property I F any one, on the reading of what has been just now faid, is ready to acquit himself, and say, " I am not one " of those who have no religious affections; I am of-" ten greatly moved with the confideration of the great " things of religion;" let him not content himself with this, that he has religious affections: for, as we observed before, as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all confift in affection; fo, on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected had true grace, and was therein the subject of the faving influences of the Spirit of God: and that therefore the right way is to distinguish among religious affections, between one fort and another. Therefore let us now endeavour to do this: and in order to it, I would do two things.

I. I would mention some things, which are no signs one way or the other, either that affections are such as true religion consists in, or that they are otherwise; that we may be guarded against judging of affections by false signs.

II. I would observe some things, wherein those affections which are spiritual and gracious, differ from those which are not so, and may be distinguished and known.

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FIRST, I would take notice of some things, which are no figns that affections are gracious, or that they

I. It is no fign one way or the other, that religious

affections are very great, or raifed very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high affections: if persons appear to have their religious affections raised to an extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are delusions, without further inquiry. But if it be as has been proved, that true religion lies very much in religious affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if true religion in the hearts of men be raifed to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raifed to a great height.

Love is an affection; but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? and will any fay, we ought not to have a very great hatred of fin, and a very deep forrow for it? or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God, for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the falvation of fallen men? or that we should not have very great and strong defires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough; and will fay, "I have no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the things of religion than " I am; I have no reason to be ashamed, that I have "no greater exercises of love to God, and sorrow for " fin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have re-" ceived ?" Who is there that will go and bless God that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Chrif-

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tians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religi-

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections, when it speaks of 'rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:' here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. And the scriptures often require us to exercise very high affections: thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the degree in which we ought to love God; 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God " with all thy heart, with all thy foul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' So the faints are called upon to exercise high degrees of joy: 'Rejoice,' says Christ to his disciples, 'and be exceeding glad,' Matth. v. 12. So it is faid, Pfal. lxviii. 3. 'Let the righteous be glad: let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.' So in the same book of Psalms, the faints are often called upon to shout for joy; and in Luke vi. 23. to leap for joy. So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high degrees of gratitude for mercies, to ' praise God with all their hearts, with hearts 4 lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and their fouls magnifying the Lord, finging his praises, talking of his wondrous works, declaring his doings,' &c.

And we find the most eminent saints in scripture often professing high affections. Thus the Psalmist speaks of his love, as if it were unspeakable; Psal. cxix. 97. O how love I thy law!' So he expresses a great degree of hatred of fin; Pfal. cxxxix. 21, 22. ' Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with them that rife up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred.' He also expresses a high degree of forrow for fin: he speaks of his fins 'going over his head, as an heavy burden, that was too hea-' vy for him: and of his roaring all the day, and his 4 moisture's being turned into the drought of Summer, and his bones being as it were broken with forrow. So he often expresses great degrees of spiritual desires, in a

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multitude of the strongest expressions which can be conceived of; fuch as ' his longing, his foul's thirsting as a dry and thirsty land where no water is, his panting, his flesh and heart crying out, his foul's breaking for " the longing it hath,' &c. He expresses the exercises of great and extreme grief for the fins of others, Pfal. exix. 136. 'Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.' And ver. 53. 'Hor-' ror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forfake thy law.' He expresses high exercises of joy, Pfal. xxi. 1. 'The king shall joy in thy strength, " and in thy falvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" Pfal. Ixxi. 23. 'My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I fing unto thee.' Pfal. Ixiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Because thy loving kindness is better than life: my lips shall ' praise thee. Thus will I bless thee, while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My foul shall be ' fatisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth fhall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember ' thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the nightwatches. Because thou hast been my help; therefore

The Apostle Paul expresses high exercises of affection. Thus he expresses the exercises of pity and concern for others good, even to anguish of heart; a great, fervent, and abundant love, and earnest and longing desires, and exceeding joy; and speaks of the exultation and triumphs of his soul, and his earnest expectation and hope, and his abundant tears, and the travails of his soul, in pity, grief, earnest desires, godly jealously, and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. John the Baptist expressed great joy, John iii. 39. Those blessed women that anointed the body of Jesus, are represented as in a very high exercise of religious affection, on occasion of Christ's resurrection; Matth. xxviii. 8. 'And 'they departed from the sepulchre, with fear and great

' joy.'

It is often foretold of the church of God, in her future happy seasons here on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. 'They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy right-eousness shall they be exalted.' Zech. ix. 9. 'Re-ijoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh,' &c. The same is represented in innumerable other places. And because high degrees of joy are the proper and genuine fruits of the gospel of Christ, therefore the angel calls this gospel, 'good tidings of great joy, that should be

to all people.

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The faints and angels in heaven, that have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate of God's perfections and works. They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire, in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude: their praifes are represented, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a ' great thunder.' Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of faints on earth, is, they fee the things they are affected by, more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And, therefore, if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better; because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that religious affections being in a very high degree, is no evidence that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusialts, merely because their affections are

very high.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy E 3 fcripture,

scripture, our sure and infallible rule to judge of things of this nature, that there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The apostle Paul speaks of affections in the Galatians, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifeltly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing, Gal. iv. 15. Where is the bleffedness you spoke of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your ' own eyes, and have given them to me.' And in the 11th verse he tells them, 'he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain.' So the children of Israel were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had feen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they fang God's praise; though they soon forgat his works. So they were greatly affected again at mount Sinai, when they faw the marvellous manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardness made answer, when God proposed his holy covenant to them, faying, 'Alla that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient.' But how foon was there an end to all this mighty forwardness and engagedness of affection? how quickly were they turned afide after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf? So great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jesus presently after entered into Jerusalem, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though the ground were not good enough for the as he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down branches of palm-trees, and strawed them in the way; yea, pulled off their garments, and spread them in the way; and cried with loud voices, 'Hofanna to the Son of David, bleffed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest;' so as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangelist John, that the reason why

the people made this ado, was because they were affected with the miracle of raising Lazarus, John xii. 18. Here was a vast multitude crying Hosanna on this occasion, so that it gave occasion to the Pharisees to say, Behold, the world is gone after him, John xii. 19. but Christ had at that time but sew true disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an end? all of this nature is quelled and dead, when this Jesus stands bound, with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned, and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud outcry concerning him, as mong the multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different kind: it is not then, Hosanna, Hosanna, but, Crucify, Crucify.

And it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections, which are raifed to a very high degree, and yet there be nothing

of true religion*.

II. It is no fign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great ef-

fects on the body.

All affections whatsoever, have in some respect or degree, an effect on the body. As was observed before, such is our nature, and such are the laws of union of soul and body, that the mind can have no lively or vigorous exercise, without some effect upon the body. So subject is the body to the mind, and so much do its study, especially the animal spirits, attend the motions and exercises of the mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense thought, without an effect upon them. Yea, it is questionable, whether an imbodied soul ever so much as thinks one thought, or has any exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding motion or alteration of motion, in some degree, of the study, in some

Mr Stoddard observes, "That common affections are formstimes stronger than saving." Guide to Christ, p. 21.

part of the body. But univerfal experience shews, that the exercise of the affections have in a special manner a tendency to some sensible effect upon the body. And if this be fo, that all affections have some effect on the body, we may then well suppose, the greater those affections be, and the more vigorous their exercise, (other circumstances being equal), the greater will be the effect on the body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very great and strong exercises of the affections should have great effects on the body. And therefore, feeing there are very great affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great effects on the body should arise from both. these kinds of affections. And consequently these effects are no figns, that the affections they arise from, are of one kind or the other.

Great effects on the body certainly are no fure evidences that affections are spiritual; for we see that such effects oftentimes arise from great affections about temporal things, and when religion is no way concerned in them. And if great affections about secular things, that are purely natural, may have these effects, I know not by what rule we should determine, that high affections about religious things, which arise in like manner from

nature, cannot have the like effect.

Nor, on the other hand, do I know of any rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy affections, when raifed as high as any natural affections, and have equally strong and vigorous exercises, cannot have a great effect on the body. No such rule can be drawn from reason: I know of no reason, why a being affected with a view of God's glory should not cause the body to faint, as well as being affected with a view of Solomon's glory. And no fuch rule has as yet been produced from the scripture: none has ever been found in all the late controversies which have been about things. There is a great power in spiritual afof this nature. fections; we read of the power which worketh in Christians*, and of the Spirit of God being in them, as * Eph. iii. 7.

the Spirit of power +, and of the effectual working of his power in them ‡, yea, of the working of God's mighty power in them ||. But man's nature is weak: flesh and blood are represented in scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with respect to its unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly operations and exercises, Matth. xxvi. 41. 1 Cor. xv. 43. and 50. The text we are upon speaks of 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' And who that confiders what man's nature is, and what the nature of the affections are, can reasonably doubt but that fuch unutterable and glorious joys, may be too great and mighty for weak dust and ashes, so as to be confiderably overbearing to it? It is evident by the scripture, that true divine discoveries, or ideas of God's glory, when given in a great degree, have a tendency, by affecting the mind, to everbear the body; because the scripture teaches us often, that if these ideas or views should be given to such a degree, as they are given in heaven, the weak frame of the body could not subsist under it, and that no man can, in that manner, see God and live. The knowledge which the faints have of God's beauty and glory in this world, and those holy affections that arife from it, are of the same nature and kind with what the faints are the subjects of in heaven, differing only in degree and circumstances: what God gives them here, is a foretafte of heavenly happiness, and an earnest of their future inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this earnest, or fay he shall give so much of the inheritance, such a part of the future reward, as an earnest of the whole, and no more? And feeing God has taught us in his word, that the whole reward is fuch, that it would at once destroy the body, is it not too bold a thing for us, fo to fet bounds to the Sovereign God, as to fay, that in giving the earnest of this reward in this world, he shall never give so much

† 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Eph. iii. 7. 20. || Eph. i. 19.

of it, as in the least to diminish the strength of the body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The Pfalmist speaking of vehement religious affections he had, speaks of an effect in his sless or body, besides what was in his soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psal. lxxxiv. 2.

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my sless crieth out for the living God. Here is a plain distinction between the heart and the sless, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1. My soul thirsteth for thee, my sless longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. Here also is an evident designed distinction between the soul and the sless.

The prophet Habakkuk speaks of his body's being overborn by a sense of the majesty of God, Hab. iii. 16.
When I heard, my belly trembled: my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself.' So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his slesh trembling, Psal. cxix, 120. My slesh

" trembleth for fear of thee."

That fuch ideas of God's glory as are fometimes given in this world, have a tendency to overbear the body, is evident, because the scripture gives us an account, that this has sometimes actually been the effect of those external manifestations God has made of himfelf, to some of the faints, which were made to that end. viz. to give them an idea of God's majesty and glory. Such instances we have in the prophet Daniel, and the apostle John. Daniel giving an account of an exterpal representation of the glory of Christ, says, Dan. x. 8. 'And there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned into corruption, and I retained on frength.' And the apostle John giving an account of a like manifestation made to him, fays, Rev. i. 17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.' It is in vain to fay here, these were only external manifeltations or fymbols of the glory of Christ, which these faints beheld: for though it be true, that they were outward.

outward representations of Christ's glory, which they beheld with their bodily eyes; yet the end and use of these external symbols or representations, was to give to these prophets an idea of the thing represented, and that was the true divine glory and majefty of Christ, which is his spiritual glory; they were made use of only as fignifications of this spiritual glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the end for which God intended these outward signs, they received by them a great and lively apprehension of the real glory and majesty of God's nature, which they were signs of: and thus were greatly affected, their fouls swallowed up, and their bodies overborn. And I think they are very bold and daring, who will fay God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting ideas and apprehenfions of the same real glory and majesty of his nature. to none of his faints, without the intervention of any fuch external shadows of it.

Before I leave this head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the scripture often makes use of bodily effects, to express the strength of holy and spiritual affections; such as trembling *, groaning †, being sick ‡, crying out ||, panting s, and fainting ††, Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative expressions, to represent the degree of affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable figures to represent the high degree of those spiritual affections, which the Spirit of God makes use of them to represent: which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual affections, let them be in never so high a degree, have no tendency to any such things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper effects, and sad tokens of false affections.

^{*} Pfal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Ifa. lxvi. 2, 5. Hab. iii. 16. † Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Cant. ii. 5. and v. 8. || Pfal. lxxxiv. 2. § Pfal. xxxviii. 10. and xlii. 1. and cxix. 131. †† Pfal. lxxxiv. 2. and cxix. 81.

fections, and the delusion of the devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make use of things which are very alien from spiritual affections, and are shrewd marks of the hand of Satan, and smell strong of the bottomless pit, as beautiful sigures, to represent the high degree of holy and heavenly affections.

III. It is no fign that affections are truly gracious affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent, and abundant, in

talking of the things of religion.

There are many persons, who, if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being fo full of talk, is with them a fufficient ground to condemn them, as Pharifees, and oftentatious hypocrites. On the other hand, there are many, who if they fee this effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true children of God, and are under the faving influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great evidence of a new creature: they fay, ' fuch an one's mouth is now opened: he used to be flow to speak; but now he is full and free: he is free now to open his heart, and tell his experiences, and declare the praises of God; it comes from him, as free as water from a fountain; and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting persuasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their talk.

But this is the fruit of but little judgement, a scanty and short experience; as events do abundantly shew: and is a mistake persons often run into, through their trusting to their own wisdom and decerning, and making their own notions their rule, instead of the holy scripture. Though the scripture be full of rules, both how we should judge of our own state, and also how we should be conducted in our opinion of others; yet we have no where any rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good estate, from any such

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effect: for this is but the religion of the mouth and of the tongue, and what is in the scripture represented by the leaves of a tree, which, though the tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an evi-

dence of the goodness of the tree.

That persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of things of religion, may be from a good cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their hearts are very full of holy affections; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: and it may be because persons hearts are very full of religious asfection which is not holy; for still out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is very much the nature of the affections, of whatever kind they be, and whatever objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose persons to be very much in speaking of that which they are affected with: and not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the things of religion, can be an evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the things of religion; but this may be, (as has been already shown,) and there be no grace. That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to shew that earnestness in their talk and behaviour; as the greater part of the Jews, in all Judah and Galilee, did for a while, about John the Baptift's preaching and baptism, when they were willing for a feason to rejoice in his light: a mighty ado was made, all over the land, and among all forts of persons, about this great prophet and his ministry. And so the multitude, in like manner, often manifested a great earnestness, a mighty engagedness of spirit, in every thing that was external, about Christ and his preaching and miracles, ' being aftonished at his doctrine, anon with joy receiving the word,' following him fometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink, and fleep to hear him; once following him in to the wilderness, fasting three days going

faying, 'Never man spake like this man!' being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these

things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over-full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, every where, and in all companies; and when it is fo, it is rather a dark fign than a good one. As a tree that is over full of leaves feldom bears much fruit; and as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it over-much wind, feldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth: which very thing the Holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to reprefent a great shew of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life, Prov. xxv. 14. 'Whoso · boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain.' And the apostle Jude, speaking of Some in the primitive times, that crept in unawares among the faints, and having a great shew of religion, were for a while not suspected, 'These are clouds ' (fays he) without water, carried about of winds,' Jude, ver. 4. and 12. And the apostle Peter, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17. 'These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest.'

False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true: because it is the nature of false religion, to affect shew and ob-

fervation; as it was with the Pharifees *.

IV. It

That famous experimental divine Mr Shepard, fays, A Pharifee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end; when simplicity walks through the town unseen. Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself, (and myself ever comes in,) and tells you a long story of conversion; and an hundred to one if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, I pray admire me. Hence complain of wants and weaknesses; pray think what a broken-bearted Christian I am." Parab. of the ten virgins, Part I. page 179, 180.

IV. It is no fign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, and

by their own strength.

There are many in these days, that condemn all affections which are excited in a way that the subjects of them can give no account of, as not feeming to be the fruit of any of their own endeavours, or the natural confequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under such means; but to be from the influence of some extrinsic and supernatural power upon their minds. How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience, or fensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late? They fay, the manner of the Spirit of God is to cooperate in a filent, fecret, and undiffernible way with the use of means, and our own endeavours; so that there is no distinguishing by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the faving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreasonable presumption. And to expect that

And holy Mr Flavel fays thus, "O reader, if thy heart were right with God, and thou didft not cheat thyfelf with a vain profession, thou wouldst have frequent business with God, which thou wouldst be loth thy dearest friend, or the wife of thy bosom should be privy to. Non est religio, ubi omnia patent. Religion doth not lie open to all, to the eyes of men. Observed duties maintain our credit; but secret duties maintain our life. It was the saying of an heathen, about his secret correscipondency with his friend, What need the world be acquainted with it? Thou and I are theatre enough to each other. There are inclosed pleasures in religion, which none but renewed spiritual souls do feelingly understand." Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. II. sect. 2.

the Spirit of God will favingly operate upontheir minds, without the Spirit's making use of means, as subservient to the effect, is enthusiastical. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumstances of his operations, and that sometimes he operates in a way more secret and gradual, and

from fmaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from and beyond our power, or the power of all means and instruments, and above the power of nature, which is requifite in order to the production of faving grace in the heart, according to the general profession of the country; then, certainly, it is in no wife unreasonable to suppose, that this effect should very frequently be produced after fuch a manner, as to make it very manifest, apparent, and fenfible that it is fo. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinsic agent, or divine efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose it should seem to be so to them who are the subjects of it? Is it a strange thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When grace in the heart indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a strange and unaccountable thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it, agreeable to truth, and not right contrary to truth; fo that if persons tell of effects that they are conscious to in their own minds, that feem to them not to be from the natural power or operation of their minds, but from the supernatural power of some other agent, it should at once be looked upon as a fure evidence of their being under a delusion, beeause things feem to them to be as they are? For this is the objection which is made: it is looked upon as a clear evidence, that the apprehensions and affections that many persons have, are not really from such a cause, because they seem to them to be from that cause: they declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them e vidently

evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes

treated at this day by their neighbours.

If it be indeed fo, as the scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the foul is fo the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, fuch as a generation, or a being begotten, and refurrection, or a being raifed from the dead, and creation, or a being brought out of nothing into being, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power is manifested *; then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in fo great a work of his power, should fo carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does fo? If we may judge by the scripture, this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so as to make his hand visible, and his power conspicuous, and mens dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence +, that God alone might be exalted ‡, and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man ||, and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness of, and none might say, mine own hand hath saved me ++. So it was in most of those temporal falvations which God wrought for Israel of old, which were types of the falvation of God's people from their spiritual F 3

^{*} Eph. i. 17.—20. † 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. † Isa. ii. 11.—17. || 2 Cor. iv. 7. § 2 Cor. xii. 9. †† Judg. vii. 2.

enemies. So it was in the redemption of Israel from their Egyptian bondage; he redeemed them with a frong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered Israel first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So it was in the great redemption by Gideon; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they without any other arms, than trumpets, and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So it was in the deliverance of Ifrael from Goliath, by a strippling with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the Gentiles, and converting the Heathen world, after Christ's ascension, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavours of philosophers had proved in vain, for many ages, to reform the world, and it was by every thing become abundantly evident, that the world was utterly helpless, by any thing else but the mighty power of God. And to it was in most of the conversions of particular persons, we have an account of in the history of the New Teltament: they were not wrought on in that filent, fecret, gradual, and insensible manner, which is now infifted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and fuddenly caufing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain figns of delusion and enthusiasm.

The Apostle, in Eph. i. 18, 19. speaks of God's enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end that they might know the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words are, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the siches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the extending greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,' &c. Now when the Apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end that they might know what

his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing elfe, than ' that they might know by experience.' But if the faints know this power by experience, then they feel it, and differn it, and are confcious of it; as fenfibly diffinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds, which is not agreeable to a notion of God's operating fo fecretly, and undiffernibly, that it cannot be known that they are the subjects of the influence of any extrinsic power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from scripture affertions; which is a different thing from knowing it by experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves that are the subjects of

them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the subjects of them, or that they arise in their minds in a manner they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an argument in their own favour; when speaking of what they have experienced, they fay, " I am fure I did not make it myself; " it was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavour of mine; " it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might " have the world for it, I cannot make it again when " I please." And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a faving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have been the subjects of, may indeed not be from themfelves directly, but may be from the operation of an invisible agent, some spirit besides their own: but it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits who have influence on the minds of men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. There are many false spirits, exceed-

ing buly with men, who often transform themselves into angels of light, and do in many wonderful ways, with great fubtilty and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of Satan's operations, which are very diffinguishable from the voluntary exercises of mens own minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid fuggestions, and blasphemous injections with which he follows many persons; and in vain and fruitless frights and terrors, which he is the author of. And the power of Satan may be as immediate, and as evident in false comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid fuggestions; and oftentimes is so in fact. It is not in mens power to put themselves into such raptures, as the Anabaptists in Germany, and many other raving Enthulialts like them, have been the fubjects of.

And besides, it is to be considered, that persons may have those impressions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any saving, but a common insuence of the Spirit of God: and the subjects of such impressions may be of the number of those we read of, Heb. vi. 4, 5. ' that are once enlighted, and taste of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the power of the world to come;' and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those ' better things that accompany salvation,' spoken of ver. 9.

And where neither a good nor evil spirit have any immediate hand, persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapoury habit of body, and the brain weak, and eafily susceptive of impressions, may have strange apprehensions and imaginations, and strong affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such persons are liable to such impressions about temporal things; and there is equal reason, why they should about spiritual things. As a person who is asseep has dreams that he is not the voluntary author of; so may such

persons,

persons, in like manner, be the subjects of involuntary impressions, when they are awake.

V. It is no fign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of scripture, remarkably brought to the mind.

It is no fign that affections are not gracious, that they are occasioned by scriptures so coming to mind; provided it be the scripture itself, or the truth which the scripture so brought contains and teaches, that is the soundation of the affection, and not merely, or mainly, the sudden and unusual manner of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any fign that affections are gracious, that they arise on occasion of scriptures brought fuddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether those affections be fear or hope, joy or forrow, or any other. Some feem to look upon this as a good evidence that their affections are faving, especially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleafing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience came with the word, and will fay, "There were fuch and " fuch fweet promises brought to my mind: they came " fuddenly, as if they were spoke to me: I had no " hand in bringing fuch a text to my own mind; I was " not thinking of any thing leading to it; it came all " at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought " of it a long time before; I did not know at first that " it was scripture; I did not remember that ever I had " read it." And it may be, they will add, " One " scripture came flowing in after another, and so texts " all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and " the most apt and suitable, which could be devised; " and filled me full as I could hold: I could not but " fland and admire: the tears flowed; I was full of " joy, and could not doubt any longer." And thus they think they have undoubted evidence that their affections must be from God, and of the right kind, and their

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their state good: but without any manner of grounds-How come they by any such rule, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and comfortable texts of scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are saving? where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and

only fure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate fort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; that the scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect; and therefore, those experiences which come from the scripture must be right. But then it would be considered, affections may arise on occasion of the scripture, and not properly come from the scripture, as the genuine fruit of the scripture, and by a right use of it; but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are agreeable to the word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise on occasion of the word of God coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the devil cannot bring texts of scripture to the mind, and misapply them, to deceive persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of Satan. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons minds, that we have any reason to suppose nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If Satan has power to bring any words or sounds at all to persons minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher fort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same power in Satan, which is sufficient to renew

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one of those kinds of founds in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: the different fignification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the founds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts or scriptures are such facred things, that the devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the wilderness, and into an high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the scripture, and abuse that for his own purposes: as he shewed at the same time that he was fo bold with Christ, he then brought one scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if Satan did prefume, and was permitted, to put Christ himself in mind of texts of scripture to tempt him, what reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in mind of texts of scripture, to tempt and deceive them? And if Satan may thus abuse one text of scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent place of scripture, a comfortable and precious promise, alters not the case, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, so he may a thousand; and may choose out such scriptures as tend most to serve his purpose; and may heap up scripture-promises, tending, according to the perverse application he makes of them. wonderfully to remove the rifing doubts, and to confirm the false joy and confidence of a poor deluded fin-

We know the devil's instruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the scripture, to their own and others damnation, 2 Pet. iii. 16. We see they have the free use of scripture, in every part of it: there is no text so precious and sacred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal ruin of multitudes of souls: and there are no weapons they make use of with which they do more execution. And there is no manner of reason to determine, that the devil is

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not permitted thus to use the scripture, as well as his instruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his instruments and servants, and through his instigation and influence: and doubtless he does the same he instigates others to do; the devil's servants do but follow their master, and do the same work that he does himself.

And as the devil can abuse the scripture, to deceive and destroy men, so may mens own folly and corruptions as well. The sin which is in men, acts like its father. Mens own hearts are deceitful like the devil, and use

the fame means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that perfons may have high affections of hope and joy, arifing on occasion of texts of scripture, yea precious promises of scripture coming suddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were spoke to them, yea a great multitude of such texts, following one another in a wonderful manner, and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of Satan's delusions.

And I would further observe, that persons may have raifed and joyful affections, which may come with the word of God, and not only fo, but from the word, and those affections not be from Satan, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from fome influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of true and faving religion in them. Thus the stony ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea, which is represented as arifing from the word, as growth from a feed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great and exact refemblance with those represented by the growth on the good ground, the difference not appearing until it was discovered by the consequences in a time of trial: and yet there was no faving religion in these affections *. VI. It

^{*} Mr Stoddard, in his Guide to Christ, speaks of it as a

VI. It is no evidence that religious affections are faving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an argument against the truth and faving nature of religious affections. But, on the other hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good evidence that affections are from the fanctifying and faving influences of the Holy Ghost. Their argument is, that Satan cannot love; this affection being directly contrary to the devil, whose very nature is enmity and malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly, and divine, than a spirit of true Christian love to God and men: it is more excellent than knowledge, or prophecy, or miracles, or speaking with the tongue of men and angels. It is the chief of the graces of God's Spirit, and the life, effence, and fum of all true religion; and that by which we are most conformed to heaven, and most contrary to hell and the devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more counterfeits of filver and gold, than of iron and copper: there are many false diamonds and rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common stones? Though the more excellent things are, the more difficult it is to make any thing that shall be like them, in their effential nature and internal virtue; yet the more manifold will the counterfeits be, and the more will art and fubtilty be exercised and displayed. in an exact imitation of the outward appearance. Thus there is the greatest danger of being cheated in buying

common thing, for persons while in a natural condition, and before they have ever truly accepted of Christ, to have scripture-promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; which they take as tokens of God's love, and hope that God has accepted them; and so are consident of their good estate. Page 8, 9. Impression anno 1735.

of medecines that are most excellent and sovereign, tho' it be most difficult to imitate them, with any thing of the like value and virtue, and their counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian virtues and graces; the subtilty of Satan, and mens deceitful hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest repute. So there are perhaps no graces that have more counterfeits than love and humility; these being virtues wherein the beau-

ty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with respect to love; it is plain by the scripture, that persons may have a kind of religious love, and yet have no saving grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such love, whose love will not continue, and so shall fail of salvation, Matth. xxiv. 12, 13. 'And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.' Which latter words plainly shew, that those spoken of before, whose love shall not endure to the end, but wax cold, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent affections of this nature, and yet have no grace. For this was evidently the case with many graceless Jews, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him day and night, without meat, drink, or sleep; such as said, 'Lord, I will follow thee 'whithersoever thou goest,' and cried, 'Hosanna to the Son of David *."

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^{*} Agreeable to this Mr Stoddard observes, in his Guide to Christ, that some sinners have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God, and of their aiming at the glory of God, having that which has a great resemblance of saving grace; and that sometimes their common affections are stronger than saving. And supposes, that sometimes natural men may have such violent pangs of salse affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned. Page 21, and 65.

The Apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his days, who had a counterfeit love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24. 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jefus Christ in fincerity.' The last word, in the original, figrifies in corruption; which shews, that the Apostle was sensible that there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, whose love was not pure and

foiritual.

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So also Christian love to the people of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the scripture, that there may be strong affections of this kind, without faving grace; as there were in the Galatians towards the Apostle Paul, when they were ready to pluck out their eyes and give them to him; although the Apostle expresses his fear that their affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them labour in vain, Gal. iv. 11, 15.

VII. Persons having religious affections of many kinds, accompanying one another, is not fufficient to determine whether they have any gracious affections or no.

Though false religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that entireness and symmetry of parts, which is to be feen in true religion: yet there may be a great variety of false affections together,

that may refemble gracious affections.

It is evident that there are counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affections; as of love to God, and love to the brethren, as has been just now observed; so of godly forrow for fin, as in Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab, and the children of Ifrael in the wilderness, Exod. ix. 27. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and xxvi. 21. 1 Kings xxi. 27. Numb. xiv. 39, 40.; and of the fear of God, as in the Samaritans, 'who feared the Lord, and served their own gods at the fame time,' 2 Kings xvii. 32, 33.; and those enemies of God we read of, Plal. Ixvi. 3. who 'through the greatness of God's power, sub-" mit themselves to him,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, lie unto him,' i. e. yield a counterfeit reverence and G 2 fubmission:

submission: so of a gracious gratitude, as in the children of Israel, who sang God's praise at the Red Sea, Psal. cvi. 12. and Naaman the Syrian, after his miracu-

lous cure of his leprofy, 2 Kings v. 15. &c.

So of spiritual joy, as in the stony-ground hearers, Matth. xiii. 20. and particularly many of John the Baptist's hearers, John v. 35. So of zeal, as in Jehu, z Kings x. 16. and in Paul before his conversion, Gal. i. 14. Phil. iii. 6. and the unbelieving Jews, Acts xxii. 3. Rom. x. 2. So graceless persons may have earnest religious desires, which may be like Balaam's desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary view that he had of the happy state of God's people, as distinguished from all the rest of the world, Numb. xxiii. 9, 10. They may also have a strong hope of eternal life, as the Pharisees had.

And as men, while in a state of nature, are capable of a refemblance of all kinds of religious affections, for nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in fact, does abundantly evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false affections are raised high, there are many false affections attend each other. The multitude that attended Christ into Jerusalem, after that great miracle of raising Lazarus, seem to be moved with many religious affections at once, and all in a high de-They feem to be filled with admiration, and there was a shew of an high affection of love, and also of a great degree of reverence, in their laying their garments on the ground for Christ to tread upon; and alfo of great gratitude to him, for the great and good works he had wrought, praising him with loud voices for his falvation; and earnest desires of the coming of God's kingdom, which they supposed Jesus was now about to fet up, and shewed great hopes and raised expectations of it, expecting it would immediately appear; and hence were filled with joy, by which they were fo animated in their acclamations, as to make the whole city ring with the noise of them; and appeared great III.

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in their zeal and forwardness to attend Jesus, and affist him without further delay, now in the time of the great feast of the passover, to set up his kingdom. And it is eafy, from nature, and the nature of the affections, to give an account why, when one affection is raifed very high, that it should excite others; especially if the affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit love, as it was in the multitude who cried Hofanna. This will naturally draw many other affections after it. For, as was observed before, love is the chief of the affections. and as it were the fountain of them. Let us suppose a person who has been for some time in great exercise and terror through fear of hell, and his heart weakened with diffress and dreadful apprehensions, and upon the brink of despair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through fome delution of Satan, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the object of his dear love, and promifes him eternal life; as Suppose through some vision, or strong idea or imagination, fuddenly excited in him, of a person with a beautiful countenance, fmiling on him, and with arms open, and with blood dropping down, which the person conceives to be Christ, without any other enlightening of the understanding, to give a view of the spiritual divine excellency of Christ and his fulness, and of the way of falvation revealed in the gospel: or perhaps by some voice or words coming as if they were spoke to him, fuch as thefe, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy fins be forgiven thee; or, Fear not, it is the Father's good "pleasure to give you the kingdom," which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding acceptance of Christ, or closing of the heart with him: I fay, if we should suppose such a case, what various passions would naturally croud at once, or one after another, into such a person's mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from mere principles of nature, that a person's heart, on such an occasion, should .. be raifed up to the skies with transports of joy, and be filled with fervent affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, G 3

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Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the jaws of such dreadful destruction, that his foul was so amazed with the fears of, and has received him with fuch endearment, as a peculiar favourite; and that now he should be filled with admiration and gratitude, and his mouth should be opened, and be full of talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a chearful countenance, and talk with a loud voice: and however, before his deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his feet as tame as a lamb; and that he should now confess his unworthiness, and cry out, 'Why me? why me?" (Like Saul, who when Samuel told him that God had appointed him to be king, makes answer, ' Am not I a. Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and " my family the least of all the families of the tribe of · Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me? Much in the language of David, the true faint, 2 Sam. vii. 18. "Who am I, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?)? Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent zeal against all fuch as would make nothing of fuch things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim war with all who be not of his party, and should now glory in his fufferings, and be very much, for condemning and censuring all who feem to doubt. or make any difficulty of these things; and while the warmth of his affections last, should be mighty forward to take pains, and deep himself, to promote the interest of the party who he imagines favour fuch things, and frem earnestly desirous to increase the number of them, as the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. And so I might go on, and mention many other things, which will naturally arise in such circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human nature, who thinks such things as these cannot arise in this manner, without any supernatural interposition of

divine power.

As from true divine love flow all Christian affections. fo from a counterfeit love in like manner naturally flow other false affections. In both cases, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the streams. The various faculties, principles, and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: if there be fweet water in the fountain, fweet water will from thence flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or, man's nature may be compared to a tree, with many branches, coming from one root: if the fap in the root be good. there will also be good sap distributed throughout the branches, and the fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the sap in the root and stock be poisonous, so it will be in many branches, (as in the other case), and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in . both cases may be alike; there may be an exact resemblance in shape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus (in some measure at least) oftentimes between faints and hypocrites. There is fometimes:

^{* &}quot;Affociating with godly men does not prove that a man has grace: Ahithophel was David's companion. Sorrows for the afflictions of the church, and defires for the convertion of fouls, do not prove it. These things may be found in carnal men, and so can be no evidences of grace." Stoddard's Nature of faving conversion, p. 82.

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fometimes a very great fimilitude between true and false experiences, in their appearance, and in what is expressed and related by the subjects of them: and the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and baker; they seemed to be much alike, insomuch that when Joseph interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he should be delivered from his imprisonment, and restored to the king's favour, and his honourable office in the palace, the chief baker had raised hopes and expectations, and told his dream also; but he was wofully disappointed; and though his dream was so much like the happy and well-boding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

VIII. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections by this, that comforts and joys feem to follow awakenings and convictions of

conscience, in a certain order.

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences that come in such a method, as has been much infifted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears, and awful apprehensions followed with fuch legal humblings, in a fense of total finfulness and helplefiness, and then, such and such light and comfort: they look upon all fuch schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of mens devising: and particularly if high affections of joy follow great diffress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of fin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered fenfibly, and understand their own falvation, and know fomething of what God does for them. As men that are faved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blefsedness; and as God, in the work of the salvation of mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved should be in these two states sensibly; first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a state of condemnation, and so in a state of world calamity and dreadful misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a state of deliverance and happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's suffi-

ciency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to ' lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them,' and so to order it, that they shall be brought into diffress, and made to fee their own helpleffness, and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the scripture. Then is God wont to 'repent himself for his professing peo-' ple, when their strength is gone, and there is none fhut up or left,' and when they are brought to fee that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain, Deut. xxxii. 36, 37. Before God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they were prepared for it, by being made to ' fee that they were in an evil case,' and ' to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage,' Exod. ii. 23. and v. 19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great diffress, the wilderness had thut them in, they could not turn to the right hand nor the left, and the Red Sea was before them, and the great Egyptian host behind, and they were brought to fee that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared, and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of Cannaan, God 'led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he

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s might humble them, and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end," Deut. viii. 2, 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first 'spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any, and fo was left helpless, having no more money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any money or price, and was healed by him, Luke viii. 43, 44. Before Christ would answer the request of the woman of Canaan, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herfelf worthy to be called a dog; and then he shewed her mercy, and received her as a dear child, Matth. xv. 22. &c. The Apostle Paul, before a remarkable deliverance, was ' preffed out of measure, above strength, infomuch that he despaired even of life; but had the sentence of death in him-· felf, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raifeth the dead,' 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to fink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, 'Lord, save us, we perish;' and then the winds and leas were rebuked, and there was a great calm, Matth. viii. 24, 25, 26. The leper, before he is cleanfed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great mifery and utter uncleanness, by rending his cloaths, and crying, 'Unclean, unclean,' Lev. xiii. 45. And backfliding Ifrael, before God heals them, are brought to 'acknowledge that they have finned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord,' and to fee that 'they lie down in their shame, and that confusion. covers them,' and that in vain is falvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains, and that God only can fave them, Jer. iii. 23, 24, 25. Joseph, who was fold by his brethren, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brethren into great perplexity and distress, and brings them to reslect on their sin, and to fay, We are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves

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themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their brother and their faviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to faints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was terrible, and then by those things that were comfortable. So it was with Abraham; first, a horror of great darkness fell upon him, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises, Gen xv. 12, 13. So it was with Moses at mount Sinai; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful Majefty, so that Moses said, 'I exceedingly fear and quake,' and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, 'The Lord God, gracious and merciful,' &c. So it was with Elijah; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice, I Kings xix. So it was with Daniel; he first faw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with fuch comfortable words as these, O Daniel, a man ' greatly beloved,' Dan. x. So it was with the Apostle John, Rev. i. And there is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestation which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in scripture which do more directly shew, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men, and in the manifestations God makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt, and the king pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he

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has, and is brought to fee himfelf in extreme circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his father, Luke xv. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing: and the scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, to this, and speaks of healing this wound without thus fearthing of it, as vain and deceitful, Jer. viii. 11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, Psal. lxxii. 6. reprefenting his refreshing, comforting influences on the wounded spirit. Our first parents, after they had finned, were first terrified with God's Majesty and injustice, and had their fin, with its aggravations, fet before them by their Judge, before they were relieved by the promise of the seed of the woman. Christians are spoken of as those ' that have fled for refuge, to lay ' hold on the hope fet before them,' Heb. vi. 18. which representation implies great fear, and fense of danger, preceding. To the like purpose, Christ is called 'a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as 4 the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' Isa. xxxii. at the beginning. And it feems to be the natural import of the word gofpel, 'glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and falvation, after great fear and distress. There is also reason to suppose, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his church, which he first made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that schoolmaster, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful found of the gospel from mount Sion. So likewife John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ, and prepare mens hearts for his reception, by shewing them their fins, and by bringing the felf-righteous Jews off from their own righteousness. telling them that they were 'a generation of vipers,' and shewing them their danger of 'the wrath to come,' telling them that ' the ax was laid at the root of the trees, &c.

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And if it be indeed God's manner, (as I think the foregoing confiderations flew that it undoubtedly is), before he gives men the comfort of a deliverance from their fin and mifery, to give them a confiderable fense of the greatness and dreadfulness of those evils, and their extreme wretchedness by reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that persons, at least, oftentimes, while under these views, should have great distresses and terrible apprehensions of mind: especially if it be confidered what these evils are that they have a view of; which are no other than great and manifold fins, against the infinite majesty of the great JEHOVAH, and the suffering of the sierceness of his wrath to all eternity. And the more fo still, when we have many plain instances in scripture, of persons that have actually been brought into great diffress, by fuch convictions, before they have received faving confolations: as the multitude at Jerusalem, who were 'pricked in their heart, and faid unro Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? and the Apostle Paul, who trembled and was astonished, before he was comforted; and the jailor, when 'he called for ' a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and faid, Sirs, what must " I do to be faved?"

From these things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians, to make this an objection against the truth and spiritual nature of the comfortable and joyful affections which any have, that they follow such awful apprehensions and distresses, as have been mentioned.

And, on the other hand, it is no evidence that comforts and joys are right, because they succeed great terrors, and amazing sears of hell *. This seems to be

^{**} Mr Shepard speaks of "mens being cast down as low as hell by sorrow and lying under chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come, and then raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; and yet not rent from lust:

what fome persons lay great weight upon; effecting great terrors an evidence of a great work of the law wrought on the heart, well preparing the way for folid comfort: not confidering that terror, and a conviction of conscience, are different things. For though convictions of conscience do often cause terror; yet they do not confift in it; and terrors do often arise from other causes. Convictions of conscience, through the influences of God's Spirit, consist in conviction of sinfulnels of heart and practice, and of the dreadfulnels of fin, as committed against a God of terrible majesty, infinite holiness and hatred of sin, and strict justice in punishing of it. But there are some persons that have frightful apprehensions of hell, a dreadful pit ready to fwallow them up, and flames just ready to lay hold of them, and devils around them, ready to feize them; who at the same time feem to have very little proper enlightnings of conscience; really convincing them of their finfulness of heart and life. The devil, if permitted, can terrify men as well as the Spirit of God, it is a work natural to him, and he has many ways of doing it, in a manner tending to no good. He may exceedingly affright persons, by impressing on them many external images and ideas, of a countenance frowning, a fword drawn, black clouds of vengeance, words of an awful doom pronounced +, hell gaping, devils com-

and such are objects of pity now, and are like to be the objects of terror at the great day." Parable of the ten

Virgins, P. i. p. 125.

† "The way of the Spirit's working, when it does convince men, is by enlightening natural conscience. The
Spirit does not work by giving a testimony, but by afsisting natural conscience to do its work. Natural consisting natural conscience to do its work. Natural consistence is the instrument in the hand of God, to accuse,
condemn, terrify, and to urge to duty. The Spirit of
God leads men into the consideration of their danger,
and makes them to be affected therewith, Prov. xx. 27.
The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all
the ineward parts of the belly." Stoddard's Guide to Christ,
page 44.

ing, and the like, not to convince persons of things that are true, and revealed in the word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless determinations; as that their day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a resolution immediate-

ly to cut them off, &c.

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And the terrors which fome persons have, are very much owing to the particular constitution and temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest, than that some persons are of such a temper and frame, that their imaginations are more strongly impressed with every thing they are affected with, than others; and the impressor on the imagination re-acts on the affection, and raises that still higher; and so affection and imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their affection is raised to a vast height, and the person is swallowed up, and

loses all possession of himself *.

And some speak of a great fight they have of their wickedness, who really, when the matter comes to be well examined into and throughly weighed, are found to have little or no convictions of confcience. They tell of a dreadful hard heart, and how their heart lies like a stone; when truly they have none of those things in their minds or thoughts, wherein the hardness of mens heart does really confift. They tell of a dread. ful load and fink of fin, a heap of black and loathfome filthiness within them; when, if the matter be carefully inquired into, they have not in view any thing wherein the corruption of nature does truly confift, nor have they any thought of any particular thing wherein their hearts are finfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any exercises at all of corruption in H 2

The famous Mr Perkins diftinguishes between "those forrows that come through convictions of conscience, and melancholic passions arising only from mere imaginations, frongly conceived in the brain; which, he says, usually come on a sudden, like lightening into a house." volume of his works, page 385.

them. And many think also they have great convictions of their actual sins, who truly have none. They tell how their sins are set in order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a row, with a dreadful frightful appearance; when really they have not so much as one of the sins they have been guilty of in the course of their lives, coming into view, that they

are affected with the aggravations of.

And if persons have had great terrors which really have been from the awakening and convincing influences of the Spirit of God, it doth not thence follow that their terrors must needs issue in true comfort. The unmortified corruption of the heart may quench the Spirit of God, (after he has been striving), by leading men to presumptuous, and self-exalting hopes and joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every woman who is really in travail, that brings forth a real child; but it may be a monstrous production, without any thing of the form or properties of human nature belonging to it. Pharaoh's chief baker after he had lain in the dungeon with Joseph, had a vision that raised his hopes, and he was listed up out of the dungeon, as well as the chief butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if comforts and joys do not only come after great terrors and awakenings, but there be an appearance of fuch preparatory convictions and humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by such steps, and in such a method, as has frequently been observable in true converts; this is no certain sign that the light and comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these

following reasons:

First, As the devil can counterfeit all the saving operations and graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those operations that are preparatory to grace. If Satan can counterfeit those effects of God's Spirit which are special, divine, and sanctifying, so that there shall be a very great resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those works of God's Spirit which are common, and which

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which men, while they are yet his own children, are the subjects of. These works are in no wife so much above him as the other. There are no works of God that are so high and divine, and above the powers of nature, and out of the reach of the power of all creatures, as those works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the creature in his own image, and makes it to be a partaker of the divine nature. But if the devil can be the author of such resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior kind. And it is abundantly evident in fact, that there are false humiliations, and false submisfions, as well as false comforts *. How far was Saul brought, though a very wicked man, and of a haughty fpirit, when he (though a great king) was brought, in conviction of his fin, as it were to fall down, all in tears, weeping aloud, before David his own subject, (and one that he had for a long time mortally hated, and openly treated as an enemy), and condemn himself before him, crying out, 'Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have reward "ed thee evil?" And at another time, 'I have finned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. and chap. xxvi. 21. And yer Saul feems then to have had very little of the influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil spirit H 3 from-

The venerable Stoddard observes, "A man may say,"
that now he can justify God however he deals with
him, and not be brought off from his own righteousness;
and that some men do justify God, from a partial con
viction of the righteousness of their condemnation; conficience takes notice of their sinfulness, and tells them
that they may be righteously damned; as Pharaoh, who
justified God, Exod. ix. 27. And they give some kind
of consent to it, but many times it does not continue,
they have only a pang upon them, that usually dies away after a little time." Guide to Christ, page 71.

from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud monarch, in a pang of affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a subject that he hated, and still continued an enemy to, there doubtless may be appearances of great conviction and humiliation in men, before God, while they yet remain enemies to him, and though they finally continue fo. There is oftentimes in men, who are terrified through fears of hell, a great appearance of their being brought off from their own righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all ways, although they are in many ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some ways of trusting in their own righteousness, for others that are more fecret and fubtil. Oftentimes a great degree of discouragement, as to many things they used to depend upon, is taken for humiliation: and that is called a submission to God, which is no absolute submission, but has some secret bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the operations and effects of the Spirit of God, in the convictions and comforts of true converts. may be fophisticated, then the order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain order. If the devil can make A, B, and C, it is as eafy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary order. The nature of divine things is harder for the devil to imitate, than their order. He cannot exactly imitate divine operations in their nature, though his counterfeits may be very much like them in external appearance; but he can exactly imitate their order. When counterfeits are made, there is no divine power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no order or method of operations and experiences is any certain fign of their divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain evidence of grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any power short of divine.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, We have no certain rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those operations and convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and faving, and yet the person that is the subject of them never be converted, but fall short of salvation at last. There is no necessary connection in the nature of things, between any thing that a natural man may experience, while in a state of nature, and the saving grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no connection in the nature of things, then there can be no known and certain connection at all, unless it be by divine revelation. But there is no revealed certain connection between a state of falvation, and any thing that a natural man can be the fubject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain connection between falvation, and any qualifications in men, but only grace and its fruits. And therefore we do not find any legal convictions, or comforts following these legal convictions, in any certain method or order, ever once mentioned in the scripture, as certain figns of grace, or things peculiar to the faints; although we do find gracious operations and effects themfelves, fo mentioned, thousands of times. Which should be enough with Christians, who are willing to have the word of God, rather than their own philosophy, and experiences, and conjectures, as their sufficient and fure guide in things of this nature.

Fourthly, Experience does greatly confirm, that persons seeming to have convictions and comforts following one another in such a method and order, as is frequently observable in true converts, is no certain sign of grace *.

^{*} Mr Stoddard, who had much experience of things of this nature, long ago observed, that converted and unconverted men cannot be certainly distinguished by the account they give of their experience: the same relation of experiences being common to both. And that many persons have given a sair account of a work of conversion, that have carried well in the eye of the world for several years, but have not proved well at last. Appeal to the Learned, p. 75, 76.

I appeal to all those ministers in this land, who have had much occasion of dealing with souls in the late extraordinary season, whether there has not been many who do not prove well, that have given a fair account of their experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to rule, i. e. with convictions and affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that order and method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the order of the operations of the Spirit of God in conversion.

And as a feeming to have this diffinctness as to steps and method, is no certain fign that a person is converted; fo a being without it, is no evidence that a perfor is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a demonstration, on scripture-principles, that a finner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his fin and mifery, and of his own emptiness and helplessness, and his just defert of eternal condemnation; and that therefore fuch' convictions must be some way implied in what is wrought in his foul; yet nothing proves it to be neces fary, that all those things which are implied or presupposed in an act of faith in Christ, must be plainly and diffinctly wrought in the foul, in fo many fuccessive and separate works of the Spirit, that shall be each one plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the" contrary, (as Mr Shepard observes), sometimes the change made in a faint, at first work, is like a confused chabs; fo that the faints know not what to make of it. The manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unfearchable: we, as it were, hear the found of it, the effect of it is discernible; but no man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the way of the Spirit in the new birth, as in the first birth : Eccl. xi. 5. 'Thou "knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, or how "the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God, that worketh all.' The ingenerating of a principle

of grace in the foul, feems in scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. And therefore the church is called Christ's mother, Cant. iii. 11. And fo is every particular believer, Matth. xii. 49, 50. And the conception of Christ in the womb of the bleffed virgin, by the power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed resemblance of the conception of Christ in the foul of a believer, by the power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow, either in the womb, or heart that conceives this holy Child. The new creature may use that language in Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. 'I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my foul knoweth right well. My fubstance was not hid from thee, when I was made in fecret.' Concerning the generation of Christ, both in his person, and also in the hearts of his people, it may be faid, as in Isa. liii. 8. 'Who can declare his generation?' We know not the works of God, that worketh all. 'It is the glory of God to ' conceal a thing,' (Prov. xxv. 2.) and to have ' his path as it were in the mighty waters, that his footsteps "may not be known: and especially in the works of his Spirit on the hearts of men, which are the highest and chief of his works. And therefore it is faid, Ifa. xl. 13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? It is to be feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain steps and methods. Experience plainly shews, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, in the method of his operations, in their convertion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed differnibly in the steps of a particular established scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A scheme of what is necessary, and according to a rule already received and established by common opinion, has a valt (though to many a very infensible) influence in forming persons notions of the

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fteps and method of their own experiences. I know very well what their way is; for I have had much opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their experiences appear like a confused chaos, as Mr Shepard expresses it: but then those passages of their experience are picked out, that have most of the appearance of such particular feps that are infifted on; and these are dwelt upon in the thoughts, and thefe are told of from time to time, in the relation they give: thefe parts grow brighter and brighter in their view; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure: and what they have experienced is infensibly strained to bring all to an exact conformity to the scheme that is established. And it becomes natural for ministers, who have to deal with them, and direct them that infilt upon distinctness and clearness of method, to do so too. But yet there hasbeen fo much to be feen of the operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with fouls, and are not blinded with a feven-fold vail of prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in the manner of his operating, that in many cases it is impossible to trace him, or find out his way.

What we have principally to do with, in our inquiries into our own state, or directions we give to others, is the nature of the effect that God has brought to pass in the foul. As to the steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that effect to pass, we may leave them to him. We are often in scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the nature of the fruits of the Spirit; but no where by the Spirit's method of producing them *.

Many

If the man do not know the time of his conversion, or first closing with Christ; the minister may not draw

Mr Shepard, speaking of the soul's closing with Christ, says, "As a child cannot tell how his soul comes into it, on or it may be when; but afterwards it sees and feels that life; so that he were as bad as a beast, that should deny an immortal soul; so here." Parable of the tent Wirgins, Part II. p. 171.

Many do greatly err in their notions of a clear work of conversion; calling that a clear work, where the successive steps of influence, and method of experience is cleare whereas that indeed is the clearest work, (not where the order of doing is clearest, but) where the spiritual and divine nature of the work, done, and effect wrought, is most clear.

IX. It is no certain fign that the religious affections which persons have are such as have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zeal-ously engaged in the external duties of worship.

This has, very unreasonably, of late been looked upon as an argument against the religious affections which some have had, that they spend so much time in reading, praying, singing, hearing sermons, and the like. It is plain from the scripture, that it is the tendency of true grace to cause persons very much to delight in such religious exercises. True grace had this effect on Anna the prophetes; Luke ii. 37. 'She departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.' And grace had this effect upon the primitive Christians in Jerusalem, Acts ii. 46, 47. 'And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God.' Grace made Daniel delight in

44 any peremprory conclusion from thence, that he is not

[&]quot;godly." Stoddard's Guide to Christ, p. 83.

"Do not think there is no compunction, or sense of sin, wrought in the soul, because you cannot so clearly discern and feel it; nor the time of the working, and first besigning of it. I have known many that have come with their complaints, that they were never humbled, they never felt it so; yet there it hath been, and many times they have seen it, by the other spectacles, and blessed God for it." Shepard's Sound Believer, page 38. The late impression in Boston.

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the duty of prayer, and folemnly to attend it three times a day: as it also did David, Pfal. lv. 17. Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray.' Grace makes the faints delight in finging praifes to God: Pfal. cxxxv. 3. Sing praifes unto his name, for it is pleafant. And exlvii. 1. 'Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to fing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and ' praise is comely.' It also causes them to delight to hear the word of God preached: it makes the gospel a joyful found to them, Pfal. lxxxix. 15, and makes the feet of those who publish these good tidings to be beautiful; Ifa. lii. 7. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!' &c. It makes them love God's public worship; Psal. xxvi. 8. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.' And Exvii. 4. One thing have I defired of the Lord, that will I feek after, that I may dwell in the house of * the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.' Pfal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. &c .- How amiable are thy tabernacles, Lord of hofts! my foul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.—Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where the may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hofts, my King, and my God. Bleffed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be ftill praifing thee. Bleffed is the man in whose heart are the ways of them, who, passing through the valley of Baca,-go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.'-ver. 10. 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.'

This is the nature of true grace. But yet, on the other hand, persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external exercises of religion, and to spend much time in them, is no sure evidence of grace; because such a disposition is found in many that have no grace. So it was with the Israelites of old, whose services were abominable to God; they attended

the "new moons, and fabbaths, and calling of affemblies, " and spread forth their hands, and made many prayers," Ifa. i. 12,-15. So it was with the Pharifees; they " made long prayers, and fasted twice a week.' Falle religion may cause persons to be loud and earnest in prayer: Ifa. lviii. 4. 'Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to cause your voice to be heard on high.' That religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause men to delight in religious duties and ordinances: Isa. lviii. 2. 'Yet they feek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forfook not the ordinance of their God: they alk of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in ap-' proaching to God.' It may cause them to take delight in hearing the word of God preached; as it was with Ezekiel's hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they fit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them : for with their mouth they ' shew much love, but their heart goeth after their co-' vetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely fong of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.' So it was with Herod; he heard John the Baptist gladly, Mark vi. 20. So it was with others of his hearers, 'for a feafon they rejoiced ' in his light,' John v. 35. So the stony-ground hearers heard the word with joy.

Experience shews, that persons, from false religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external exercises of religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole time to them. Formerly a sort of people were very numerous in the Romish church, called recluses, who forsook the world, and utterly abandoned the society of mankind, and shut themselves up close, in a narrow cell, with a vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the sace of any of mankind any more; (unless that they might be visited in case of sickness); to spend all their days in the exercises of de-

votion and converse with God. There were also in old time, great multitudes called Hermits and Anchorites; that lest the world to spend all their days in lone-some desarts, to give themselves up to religious contemplations and exercises of devotion; some sorts of them having no dwellings, but the caves and vaults of the mountains, and no food, but the spontaneous productions of the earth.—I once lived, for many months, next door to a Jew, (the houses adjoining one to another), and had much opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest person that ever I saw in my life; great part of his time being spent in acts of devotion, at his eastern window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the day-time, but sometimes whole nights.

X. Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much dispose perfons with their mouths to praise and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much time in the external exercises of religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular confideration.

No Christian will make it an argument against a perfon, that he seems to have such a disposition. Nor can
it reasonably be looked upon as an evidence for a person,
if those things that have been already observed and
proved, be duly considered, viz. that persons, without
grace, may have high affections towards God and Christ,
and that their affections, being strong, may fill their
mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the things they are affected with, and that
there may be counterseits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly,

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that this is no certain fign of grace, if we confider what instances the scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this, in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles; Mark ii. 12. 'And immediately he arofe, took up his bed, and went forth before them all, infomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.' So Matth. ix. 8. and Luke v. 26. Also Matth, xv. 31. Infomuch that the multitude wondered when they faw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the ' lame to walk, and the blind to fee: and they glorified ' the God of Ifrael.' So we are told, that on occasion of Christ's raising the son of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 16. 'There came a fear on all: and they glorified God, faying, That a great prophet is rifen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.' So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke iv. 15. 'And he taught in their ' fynagogues, being glorified of all.' And how did they praise him with loud voices, crying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David; Hosanna in the highest; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,' a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the Apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that 'all men glorified God for that which was done,' Acts iv. 21. When the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, heard from Paul and Barnabas, that God would reject the Jews, and take the Gentiles to be his people in their room, they were affected with this goodness of God to the Gentiles, 'and glorified the word of ' the Lord:' but all that did so were not true believers; but only a certain elect number of them; as is intimated in the account we have of it, Acts xiii. 48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and ' glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.' So of old the children of Israel at the Red Sea, 'fang God's praise: but foon forgat his works.' And the Jews in Ezekiel's I 2 time.

time, 'with their mouth shewed much love, while their 'heart went after their covetousness.' And it is fore-told of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should shew a forwardness to glorify God; Isalxvi. 5. 'Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be

glorified.

It is no certain fign that a person is graciously affected, if, in the midst of his hopes and comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited mcrcy to him that is fo unworthy, and feems greatly to extol and magnify free grace. Those that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity against God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindnels from God, cry out of their unworthinels, and magnify God's undeferved goodness to them, from no other conviction of their ill-defervings, and from no higher principle than Saul had, who, while he yet remained with unsubdued pride and enmity against David, was brought, though a king, to acknowledge his unworthinefs, and cry out, 'I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly,' and with great affection and admiration, to magnify and extol David's unmerited and unexampled kindness to him, I Sam. xxv. 16,-19. and xxvi. 21.: and from no higher principle than that from whence Nebuchadnezzar was affected with God's difpenfations, that he faw and was the subject of, and praifes, extols and honours the King of heaven; and both he, and Darius, in their high affections, call upon all nations to praife God, Dan. iii. 28, 29, 30. and iv. I. 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. and vi. 25, 26, 27.

XI. It is no fign that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make perfons that have them exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate.

It is an argument with some, against persons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their

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good estate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favour of God; supposing that there is no such thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and abfolute affurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom: contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plainest scripture-evidence. It is manifest, that it was a common thing for the faints that we have a history or particular account of in scripture, to be affured. God, in the plainest and most pofitive manner, revealed and testified his special favour to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel, and others. Job often speaks of his fincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and affurance, often calling God to witness to it; and fays plainly, ' I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see ' him for myself, and not another,' Job xix. 25. &c. David, throughout the book of Pfalms, almost every where speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner, of God as his God: glorifying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence,. his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. Hezekiah appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth, and with a perfect heart,. 2 Kings xx. 3. Jefus Chrift, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John, (which was as it were Christ's last: will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church), often declares his special and everlasting love to them, in the plainest and most positive terms; and promifes them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time, that he does so, to the end, that their joy might be full; John xv. 11. 'These things have I "fpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, "and that your joy might be full.' See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, chap. xvi. 33. 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might

have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them; he did not defire to hold them in the least suspence. And he concluded that last discourse of his with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks politively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them favingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their fakes he fanctified himself; and that his will was, that they should be with him in his glory: and tells his Father, that he spake these things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, yer. 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the contrived ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full affurance of their future glory.

The Apostle Paul, through all his epistles, speaks in an affured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord, and Master, and Redeemer,. and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four: Gal. ii. 20. 'Christ liveth in me : and the life which I on now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of "God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Phil. i. 21. 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." 2 Tim. i. 12. 'I know whom I have believed, and "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I. have committed unto him against that day.' 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there: " is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the " Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day.

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly shew it to be God's

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delign to make ample provision for the faints having an affured hope of eternal life, while living here upon earth. For fo are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made fure on God's part. 'The govenant is ordered in all things and fure: the promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared defign in all this is, that the heirs of the promifes might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an affurance of their future glory. Heb. vi. 17, 18. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have aftrong confolation, who have fled for refuge tolay hold on the hope fet before us." But all this would be in vain, to any fuch purpose, as the faints: ftrong confolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases was not attainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as fure as they will, cannot give ftrong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified Heb ix. 9. if assurance of freedom from the guilt of fin is not attainable.

It further appears that affurance is not only arta nable in some very extraordinary cases, that all Christias are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 Pet. i. 5,—8. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming of Christians, and an argument of something very blameable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 'Know ye not your own felves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' And it is implied that it is an ar-

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gument of a very blameable negligence in Christians; if they practice Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, in that 1 Cor. ix. 26. I therefore fo run, as not uncertainly.' And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians knowing their interests in the faving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the apostles tell us by what means Christians (and not only apostles and martyrs) were wont to know this; I Cor. ii. 12. ' Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is, of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' And I John ii. 2. 'And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' And ver. 5. ' Hereby know we that we are in him.' Chap. iii. 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' ver. 19. 'Hereby we' know that we are of the truth, and shall affure our hearts before him. ver. 24. Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given " us.' So Chap. iv. 13. and Chap. v. 2. and ver. 10.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects

of feem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because the affections they have are attended with an exceeding considence that their state is good, and their affections divine *. Nothing can be certainly argued

^{* &}quot;O professor look carefully to your foundation: Be
"not high minded, but fear.' You have, it may be, done
"and suffered many things in and for religion; you have
"excellent gifts and sweet comforts; a warm zeal for
"God, and high confidence of your integrity: all this may
be right, for ought that I, or (it may be) you know:
but yet, it is possible it may be false also. You have
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gued from their confidence, how great and frong foever it feems to be. If we fee a man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar, and appropriating language in prayer, · My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Saviour, my Beloved,' and the like; and it is a common thing for him to use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, I know certainly that God is my Father; I know fo furely as there is a God in heaven, that he is my God; I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me; and feems to have done for ever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to contemn all that so much as intimate or fuggest that there is some reason to doubt or fear whether all is right; fuch things are no figns at all that it is indeed fo as he is confident it is *. Such

fometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; but remember your final sentence is not yet pronounced by your Judge. And what if God weigh you over again, in his more equal balance, and should iay, Mene, Tekel, 'Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting?' What a confounded man wilt thou be, under such a sentence! Que splendent in conspectu bominis, fordent in conspectu judicis; things that are highly esteemed of men, are an abomination in the sight of God: he seeth not as men seeth. Thy heart may be false, and thou not know it: yea, it may be false, and thou strongly consident of its integrity." Flavell's Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. ii. sect. 5.

"Some hypocrites are a great deal more confident than many faints." Stoddard's Difcourse on the way to know sincerity and hypocrify, p. 128.

* "Doth the work of faith in some believers, bear upon its top-branches, the full ripe-fruits of a bleffed affurance? Lo, what strong confidence, and high-built persuasions, of an interest in God, have sometimes been found in unfanctified ones! Yea so strong may this false affurance be,

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an over-bearing, high-handed, and violent fort of confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show in the fight of men, which is to be feen in many, has not the countenance of a true Christian affurance: it favours more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were faints, and the most eminent of saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their eyes, and thank him for the great distinction he had made between them and other men; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the suggestion; John ix. 40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and faid unto him, Are we blind also?' If they had more of the spirit of the publican, with their confidence, who, in a fense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but fmote on his breaft, and cried out of himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more of the aspect of the confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self flattery, self-exaltation, and self-considence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and considence of their happy circumstances, be as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest, when once conscience is blinded, and convictions killed, with false, high affections, and those forementioned principles

that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment-seat of God, and there defend it. Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable,

and full of glory, giving them, through faith, a prelibation or foretafte of heaven itself, in those first-fruits of its.

how near to this comes what the Apostle supposes may

how near to this comes what the Apostle supposes may be found in apostates!" Flavel's Husbandry spiritualized, Chap. xii.

ciples let loofe, fed up and prompted by false joys and comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations impressed by Satan, transforming himself into an angel

of light.

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When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of the doubting of true faints; as, first, he has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a fure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true faints increase awakening and caution, and a lively fense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just, and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things, and dreadfully stupify the mind. Secondly, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true faint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. Thirdly, The devil does not affault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of The devil is a great enemy to a true a true faint. Christian hope, not only because it tends greatly to the comfort of him that hath it, but also because it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him that has it. A hypocrite may retain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope affaulted by him. tan affaulted Christ himself, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: and the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is

enough for the disciple, that is most privileged in this world, to be as his Master. Fourthly, He who has a false hope, has not that sight of his own corruptions which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart, and its corruptions, as an hypocrite: and the sins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing, that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a salse hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in

his own eyes.

There are two forts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of which are professed Arminians, in the doctrine of justification: and the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; which often cry down works, and mens own righteoufness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteourners of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites, Mr Shepard, in his exposition of the Parable of the ten virgins, distinguishes by the names of legal and evangelical hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such an one, in my life, that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are the very same kind of impulses and supposed revelations, (fometimes with texts of scripture, and sometimes without), that so many of late have had concerning future events; calling these impulses about their good estate, the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall shew hereafter. Those that have had visions and impulses about other things, it has generally been to reveal fuch things as they are defirous and fond of: and no wonder that perfons

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perfons who give heed to fuch things, have the fame fort of visions or impressions about their own eternal falvation, to reveal to them that their fins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favour with God, &c. and especially when they earnestly seek, expect, and wait for evidence of their election and falvation this way, as the furest and most glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found, by abundant experience, that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident: they Suppose that the great JEHOVAH has declared these and those things to them; and having his immediate teffimony, a strong considence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to fay, I know this or that ; -I know certainly; -I am as fure as that I have a being, and the like; and they despife all argument and inquiry in the case. And above all things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which is fo pleasing, so suiting their self-love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, diftinguished from most in the world in his favour, should make them strongly confident; especially when with their impulses and revelations they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known of several persons, that have had a fond defire of fomething of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them, and they have been earnestly pursuing the thing they have defired should come to pals, and have met with great difficulty and many discouragements in it, but at last have had an impression, or supposed revelation, that they should obtain what they fought; and they have looked upon it as a fure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to convince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that

that persons who are seeking their salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made

confident of that, the same way.

The confidence of many of this fort of hypocrites, that Mr Shepard calls evangelical hypocrites, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: they will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immoveable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a hely frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: but this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin; they (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways; which is a sure evidence of their delution *.

And here I cannot but observe, that there are certain doctrines often preached to the people, which need to be delivered with more caution and explanation than they frequently are; for, as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this delusion and false

"Mr Shepard speaks of it, as a "prefumptuous peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil works." And says, That "the spirit will sigh, and not sing in that bo- form, whence corrupt dispositions and passions break out." And that "though men in such frames may seem to main- tain the consolation of the Spirit, and not suspect their hypocrify, under pretence of trusting the Lord's mercy; yet they cannot avoid the condemnation of the world." Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. p. 139.

Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. p. 139.

Dr Ames speaks of it as a thing, by which the peace of a wicked man may be distinguished from the peace of a godly man, "that the peace of a wicked man continues, "whether he performs the duties of piety and righteous" ness, or no; provided those crimes are avoided that ap"pear horrid to nature itself." Cases of conscience, lib. III.

Chap. vii.

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falle confidence of hypocrites. The doctrines I fpeak of are those of ' Christians living by faith, not by fight; their giving glory to God, by trusting him in the dark; living upon Chrift, and not upon experiences; onot making their good frames the foundation of their " faith:" which are excellent and important doctrines. indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The scripture speaks of living or walking by faith, and not by fight, in no other way than thefe, viz. a being governed by a respect to eternal things, that are the objects of faith, and are not feen, and not by a respect to temporal things, which are feen; and believing things revealed, that we never faw with bodily eyes; and also living by faith in the promile of future things, without yet feeing or enjoying the things promifed, or knowing the way how they can be fulfilled. This will be eafily evident to any one that looks over the scriptures, which speak of faith in oppofition to fight; as 2 Cor. iv. 18. and v. 7. Heb. xi. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29, Rom. viii. 24. John xx. 29. But this doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Chriftians ought firmly to believe and truft in Christ, without spiritual fight or light, and although they are in a dark. dead frame, and, for the prefent, have no spiritual experiences or discoveries. And it is truly the duty of those who are thus in darkness, to come out of darkness into light, and believe. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual light or fight, is an antiscriptural and abford doctrine. The scripture is ignorant of any such faith in Christ of the operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual fight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a title to everlasting life, is a ' seeing the Son, and believing on him,' John vi. 40. True faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than persons ' behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and have the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' 2 Cor. iii. 18. and iv. 6. They into whose minds ' the light of the glorious gof-K 2

pel of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine, they believe not, 2 Cor. iv. 4. That faith, which is without spiritual light, is not the faith of the children of the light, and of the day; but the presumption of the children of darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual light or fight, tends greatly to help forward the delutions of the prince. of darkness. Men not only cannot exercise faith without some spiritual light, but they can exercise faith only just in such proportion as they have spiritual light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him: and they cannot be in the exercise of faith in him one ace. further than they have a fight of his fulness and faithfulness in exercise. Nor can they have the exercise of trust in God, any further than they are in a gracious frame. They that are in a dead carnal frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same thing as coming out of their bad frame, and turning to God: but to exhort men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their hope and peace, though theyare not in a gracious frame, and continue still to be fo, is the same thing in effect, as to exhort them confidentially to trust in God, but not with a gracious trust: and what is that but a wicked prefumption? It is just fo. impossible for men to have a strong or lively trust in. God, when they have no lively exercifes of grace, or sensible Christian experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively exercises of grace, without the exercises of grace.

It is true, that it is the duty of God's people to trust in him when in darkness, and though they remain still in darkness, in that sense, that they ought to trust in God when the aspects of his providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their prayers, and many clouds gather, and many enemies surround them, with a formidable aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all events of providence seem to be against them, all circumstances seem to render the promises of God difficult to be suffilled, and

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God must be trusted out of sight, i. e. when we cannot see which way it is possible for him to sulfil his word, every thing but God's mere word makes it look unlikely, so that if persons believe, they must hope against hope. Thus the ancient Patriarchs, and Job, and the Psalmist, and Jeremiah, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and the apostle Paul, gave glory to God by trusting in God in darkness. And we have many instances of such a glorious victorious saith in the eleventh of the Hebrews. But how different a thing is this, from trusting in God, without spiritual sight, and being at the same time in a dead and carnal frame!

There is also fuch a thing as ipiritual light's being let into the foul in one way, when it is not in another; and fo there is such a thing as the faints trusting in God, and also knowing their good estate, when they are deftitute of fome kinds of experience. As for instance, they may have clear views of God's fufficiency and faithfulnels, and fo confidently trult in him, and know that a they are his children; and at the same time; not have those clear and sweet ideas of his love, as at other timest. for it was thus with Christ himself in his last passion. And they may have views of much of God's fovereignty, holinefs, and all-fufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and must encouraging hope in God's fulness, when they are not fatisfied of their own good estate. But how different things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritnal light or experience!

Those that thus insist on persons living by faith, when they have no experience, and are in very bad frames, are also very absurd in their notions of faith. What they mean by faith is, believing that they are in a good estate. Hence they count it a dreadful sin for them to doubt of their state, whatever frames they are in, and whatever wicked things they do, because it is the great and heinous sin of unbelief; and he is the best man, and puts most honour upon God, that maintains his a hope of his good estate the most considently and immoveably,

moveably, when he has the least light or experience; that is to fay, when he is in the worst and wickedest frame and way; because, forfooth, that is a fign that: he is strong in faith, giving glory to God, and against hope believes in hope. But what Bible do they learn this notion of faith out of, that it is a man's confidently; believing that he is in a good estate*? If this be faith, the Pharifees had faith in an eminent degree : fome of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. The scripture represents faith, as that by which men are brought into a good estate; and therefore it cannot be the same thing, as believing that they are already in a good estate. To suppose that faith confifts in persons believing that they are in a good estate, is in effect the same thing, as to suppose that faith confifts in a person's believing that he has faith, or in believing that he believes.

Indeed persons doubting of their good estate, may in several respects arise from unbelief. It may be from unbelief, or because they have so little saith, that they have so little evidence of their good estate: if they had more experience of the actings of saith, and so more experience of the exercise of grace, they would have clearer evidence that their state was good; and so their doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their state may be from unbelief thus, when, though there be many things that are good evidences.

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that they are godly. We know many things by faith, Heb. xi. 3. "By faith we understand that the worlds were made by the word of God. Faith is the evidence of things not feen," Heb. xi. 1. Thus men-know the Trinity of persons of the Godhead; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he that believes in him will have eternal life; the resurrection of the dead. And if God should tell a saint that he hath grace, he might know it by believing the word of God. But it is not this way, that godly men do know that they have grace. It is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." Stoddard's nature of saving conversion p. 83. 84.

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of a work of grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a state of favour with God,... because it is they, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to anger against them. Their doubts in such a case arise from unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient sense of, and reliance on .. the infinite riches of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners. They may also be from unbelief, when they doubt of their state, because of the mystery of God's dealings with them: they are not able to reconcile fuch dispensations with God's savour: to them: or when they doubt whether they have any interest in the promises, because the promises from the aspect of providence appear so unlikely to be sulfilled; the difficulties that are in the way, are fo many and great. Such doubting arises from want of dependence upon God's almighty power, and his knowledge and wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such persons, their unbelief, and their doubting of their: state, are not the same thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as these last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of the present exercises and experiences of it, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state: men are doubtless to blame for being in a deadcarnal frame; but when they are in fuch a frame, and have no fensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are much under the prevalence of their lusts and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope should be kept: alive, in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle is put out; or to maintain the bright fun-shine in the. air, when the fun is gone down. Diftant experiences, when darkened by prefent prevailing lust and corruption; will never keep alive a gracious confidence and affurance; but that fickens and decays upon it, as necessarily as a

love,

little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented, that perfons doubteof their state in such circumstances; but, on the contrary, it is defirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wife and merciful constitution of things, which God hath established, that it should be fo. For fo hath God contrived and constituted things; in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their love decays, and the exercises of it fail, or become weak, fear should arise; for then they need it to restrain them from fin, and to excite them to care for the good of their fouls, and so to fir them up to watchfulness. and diligence in religion : but God hath for ordered, that when love rifes, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from fin, and stir them up to their duty. There are no other principles, which human nature is under the influence of that will ever make men conscientions, but one of these two, fear or love; and therefore, if one of these should not a prevail as the other decayed, God's people, when fallen into dead and earnal frames, when love is affeep, would be lamentably exposed indeed. And therefore God has wifely ordained, that thefe two opposite principles ... of love and fear should rife and fall, like the two oppofire scales of a balance; when one rifes the other links. As light and darkness necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if light prevails, fo much does darks ness cease, and no more; and if light decays, so much ? does darkness prevail: so it is in the heart of a child of God: if divine love decays and falls affeep, and luft 5 prevails, the light and joy of hope goes out, and dark fear and doubting arises; and if, on the contrary, divine love prevails and comes into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust, and fear with it. Love is the spirit of adoption, or the childlike principle, if that flumbers, men fall under w fear, which is the spirit of bondage, or the servile principle; and fo on the contrary. And if it be fo, that

love, or the spirit of adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and gives sull assurance; agreeable to that of the apostle, I John iv. 18. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.' These two opposite principles of lust and holy-love, bring hope and fear into the hearts of God's children, in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the distemper of melancholy, doctrinal ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong instruction, salse principles, peculiar temptations, &c.

Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love: nor is it ever maintained by his Spirit, but when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace, and get assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have as

furance at fuch a time.

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They therefore do directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be consident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion of 'living by faith, and not by sight, and trusting God in the dark, and living upon Christ, and not upon experiences;' and warn them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelies. And it has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wichedness rages, and reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives; under a notion of honouring God, by hoping against hope, and considently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And doubtless wast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

Persons cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences of the exercises of grace, merely because they take them and use them as evidences of grace; for there are no other evidences that they can

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or ought to take. But then may persons be faid to live upon their experiences, when they make a righteoulnels of them, and instead of keeping their eye on God's glory and Christ's excellency, they turn their eyes off. these objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their minds, by viewing their own attainments, and high experiences, and the great things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own eyes. and are rich and increased with goods in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an efleem of them, on the fame account, as they have of themselves: this is living on experiences, and not on-Christ; and is more abominable in the fight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from a mere improving experiences as evidences of apinterest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this digression, I would men-

upon.

XII. Nothing can be certainly concluded concernaing the nature of religious affections, that any are the subjects of, from this, that the outward manifestations of them, and the relation persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity, and win their hearts.

The true faints have not such a spirit of discerning that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither seel, nor see, in the heart of another*. There is nothing in others, that

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[&]quot;Men may have the knowledge of their own convertion: the knowledge that other men have of it is uncertain, because no man can look into the heart of another and see the workings of grace there." Stoddard's nature of supering conversion, chap, xv. at the beginning.

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comes within their view, but outward manifeltations and appearances; but the scripture plainly intimates, that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit; I Sam. xvi. 7. The Lord feeth not as man feeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.' If. xi. 3. 'He shall * not judge after the light of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*. They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things: either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and felf-confidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wife and experienced men will proceed with great caution in fuch an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the faints to receive them cordially into their charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the

* "Mr. Stoddard observes, That "all visible figns are common to converted and unconverted men; and a relation of experiences, among the rest." Appeal to the learned,

"O how hard is it for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat! and how many upright hearts are
now censured, whom God will clear? how many false hearts
are now approved whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily
have no convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which
at most beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state.
And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright, or, on the other side,
absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering
what hath been said, it is no wonder that dangerous must
takes are so frequently made in this matter." Flavel's hufbandry spiritualized, chap. xii.

best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and bright, even fo as entirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the church of God, for such bright professors, that are received as eminent faints, among the faints, to fall away and come to nothing*. And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things that have been already observed; what things it has been shown, may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a fort of affection towards God, that bears a great refemblance of dear love to him; and fo a kind of love to the brethren, and great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, and forrow for fin, and reverences fubmission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for the interest of religion and the good of fouls. And these affections may come after great awakenings

from heaven, great professors die and decay: do not think they be all such: do not think that the elect shall fall. I ruly, some are such that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think; I John ii. 19. They were not of us. I speak this, because the Lord is shaking; and I look for great apostacies; for God is trying all his friends, through all the Christian world. In Germany what profession was there! who would have thought it! The Lord, who delights to manifest that openly, which was hid secretly, sends a sword and they fall." Shepard's Parab. Part I. p. 148, 119.

"The faints may approve thee, and God condemn thees Rev. iii. 1. Thou haft a name that thou liveft, and art dead." Men may fay, There is a true Nathanael; and God may fay, There is a felf-cozening Pharifee. Reader, thou haft heard of Judas and Demas, of Ananias and Sapphira, of Hymeneus and Philetus, once renowned and famous profeffors, and theu haft heard how they proved at laft." Flavel's

Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. ii. fect. 3.

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awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation: and counterfeit love and joy, and other affections may feem to follow these, and one another, just in the same order that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, and may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the fubjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it: and may be attended with many fweet texts of scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and may dispose them with their mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their unworthiness, and extolling free grace. And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external duties of religion, fuch as prayer, hearing the word preached, finging, and religious conference; and these things, attended with a great refemblance of a Christian assurance, in its greatest height, when the faints mount on eagles wings, above all darkness and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all thele things, and yet there be nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the delusions of Satan, and the wicked and deceitful heart. To which I may add, that all thefe things may be attended with a fweet natural temper, and a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, and a long acquaintance with the faints way of talking, and of expressing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and fubtilty in accommodating their expressions and manner of speaking to the dispositions and notions of the hearers, and a taking decency of expression and behaviour, torn ed by a good education. How great therefore may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and appearances, between an hypocrite and a true faint! Doubtless it is the glorious prerogative of the omniscient God.

as the great searcher of hearts, to be able well to separate between sheep and goats. And what an indecent, self-exaltation, and arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark mortals. to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really fincere and upright before God, and who are not?

Many feem to lay great weight on that, and to fuppose it to be what may determine them with respect to others real piety, when they not only tell a plaufible story, but when, in giving an account of their experiences, they make fuch a representation, and speak after such a manner, that they feel their talk; that is to fay, when their talk feems to harmonize with their own experience, and their hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them fay, and drawn out by it, in dear love to them. But there is not that certainty in fuch things, and that full dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true faint greatly delights in holiness; it is a most beautiful thing in his eyes; and God's work, in favingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before-perishing foul, appears to him a most glorious work: no wonder, therefore, that his heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable account of this work. wrought on his own heart, and when he fees in him probable appearances of holiness; whether those pleasing appearances have any thing real to answer them, or no. And if he uses the same words, which are commonly made use of, to express the affections of true faints, and tells of many things following one another in an order, agreeable to the method of the experience of him that hears him, and also speaks freely and boldly, and with an air of affurance; no wonder that the other thinks his experiences harmonize with his own. And if, besides all this, in giving his relation, he speaks with much affection; and, above all, if in speaking he feems to flew much affection to him to whom he speaks, fuch an affection as the Galatians did to the apostle Paul; these things will naturally have a powerful influ-

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ence, to affect and draw his hearer's heart, and open wide the doors of his charity towards him. David speaks as one who had selt Ahithophel's talk, and had once a sweet savour and relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his surprise and disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him. Psal. lv. 12. 13. 14. 'it was not an enemy—then I could have borne it;—but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in com-

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It is with professors of religion, especially such as become fo in a time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the bloffoms in the fpring *; there are valt numbers of them upon the trees, which all look fair and promiting; but yet very many of them never come to any thing. And many of those, that in a little time wither up, and drop off, and rot under the trees; yet for a while look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only fo, but smell sweet, and fend forth a pleasant odour; so that we cannot, by any of our fenfes, certainly distinguish those blossoms which have in them that secret virtue, which will afterwards appear in the fruit, and that inward folidity and firength which shalf enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot summer fun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful colours and fmell of the bloffom, that we must judge by. new converts, (professedly so), in their talk about things of religion, may appear fair, and be very favoury, and the faints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their talk, and imagine they perceive a divine favour in it, and yet all may come to nothing.

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^{*} A time of outpouring of the Spirit of God, reviving religion, and producing the pleasant appearances of it, in new converts, is in scripture compared to this very thing, viz. the spring-season, when the benign insuences of the heaven's cause the blossoms to put forth. Cant. ii. 11. 12.

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It is frange how hardly men are brought to be contented with the rules and directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other rules of their own inventing, that feem to them wifer and better. I know of no directions or counfels which Christ ever dehvered more plainly, than the rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others fincerity; viz. that we thould judge of the tree chiefly by the fruit: but yet this will not do; but other ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous consequences of this arrogant fetting up mens wifdom above the wifdom of Christ. I believe many faints have gone much out of the way of Christ's word, in this respect: and some of them have been chastised with whips, and (I had almost faid) fcorpions, to bring them back again. But many things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily, those who have gone farthest this way, that have been most highly conceited of their faculty of difcerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and fuddenly to determine the state of mens fouls, have been hypocrites, who have known nothing of true religion.

In the parable of the wheat and taxes, it is said, Matth. xiii. 26. 'When the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.' As though the tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the wheat, until then, as Mr. Flavel observes †, who mentions it as an observation of Jerome's, that 'wheat and tares are so much alike, until the blade of the wheat comes to bring forth the ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them.' And then, Mr. Flavel adds, "How difficult soever it be to discern the distinct ference between wheat and tares; yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference between special and common grace,

[†] Husbandry spiritualized, Chap. xii,

" For all faving graces in the faints, have their counter-

" feits in hypocrites; there are fimilar works in those,
" which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily

" millake for the faving and genuine effects of a fanc-

" tifying spirit,"

As it is the ear or the fruit which diftinguishes the wheat from the tares, so this is the true Shibboleth, that he who stands as judge at the passages of Jordan, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over Jordan into the true Canaan, from those that should be slain at the passages. For the Hebrew word Shibboleth, signifies an ear of corn. And perhaps the more full pronounciation of Jephthah's friends, Shibboleth, may represent a full ear with fruit in it, typisying the fruits of the friends of Christ, the antitype of Jephthah; and the more lean pronouncration of the Ephraimites his enemies, may reprefent their empty ears, typifying the show of religion in hypocrites, without substance and fruit. This is agreeable to the doctrine we are abundantly taught in scripture, viz. That he who is fet to judge those that pass through death, whether they have a right to enter into the heavenly Canaan or no, or whether they should not be stain, will judge every man according to his works. has do an integragat.

We feem to be taught the same things, by the rules given for the priest's discerning the leprosy. In many cases it was impossible for the priest to determine whether a man had the leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow inspection of the appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the appearances would come to, and had shut up the person who shewed himself to him, one seven days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the hair, which grew out of the spot that was shewed him, which was as it were the fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this head, I would say something to a strange notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good estate that others are in, as though it were

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immediately revealed to them from heaven, by their love flowing out to them in an extraordinary manner. They argue thus, that their love being very fenfible and great; it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian love: and if it be a true Christian love; the Spirit of God must be the author of it : and inasmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows certainly, whether others are the children of God or no, and is a spirit of truth, is pleafed, by an uncommon influence upon them, to cause their love to flow out, in an extraordinary manner, towards such a person as a child of God; it must needs be that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that person is a child of God. But such perfons might be convinced of the falfeness of their reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the children of God who they think are the children of God, and whom they have no reason to think otherwise of, from all that they can see in them, though God, who fearches the hearts, knows them not to be his. children. If it be their duty, then it is good, and the: want of it in; and therefore furely the Spirit of God may be the author of it: the Spirit of God, without being a spirit of falsehood, may in such a case assist a perfon to do his duty, and keep him from fin. But then they argue from the uncommon degree and special manner, in which their love flows out to the person, which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the object to be a child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their duty to love all fuch as they are bound to think are the children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great degree, though God, from other things which he fees, that are out of fight to them, knows them not to be fo. It is mens duty to love all whom they are bound in charity to look upon as the children of God, with a vastly dearer affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost capacity of our nature, so it is our duty to love those who we think

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are fo near and dear to him as his members, with an exceeding dear affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is fin in us not to love them fo. We ought to pray to God that he would by his Spirit keep us from fin, and enable us to do our duty; and may not his Spirit. answer our prayers, and enable us to do our duty, in a particular instance, without lying? if he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his people to do their duty in some instances, because he cannot do it. without being a spirit of falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us todo our duty when he pleases, and on what occasion he pleafes. When persons think others are his children, God may have other ends in causing their exceedingly. endeared love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their opinion of them be right or no : he. may have that merciful end in it, to enable them to no their duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite evil, fin. And will they fay God shall not show themthat mercy in such a case? If I am at a distance from home, and hear, that in my absence my house is burnt, but my family have, in some extraordinary manner, allescaped the flames; and every thing in the circumstances of the story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible; it would be fin in me, in fuch a case, not to feel a very great degree of gratitude to God, though the story indeed be not true. And is not God fo fovereign, that he may, if he pleases, shew me that mercy on that occasion, and enable me to do my duty in a much further degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the charge. of deceitfulness, in confirming a falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that error or mistake may be the occasion of a gracious exercise, and consequently a gracious influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6. 'He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God thanks!' The apostle is speaking of those, who, through erroneous and needless scruples, avoided eating legally unclean meats.—By this

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it is very evident, that there may be true exercises of grace, a true respect to the Lord, and particularly, atrue thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous judgment and practice. And confequently, an error may be the occasion of those true holy exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if fo, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a degree the Spirit of God may give this holy ex-

ercife, on such an occasion.

This notion, of certainly discerning another's state, by love flowing out, is not only not founded on reason or scripture, but it is anti-scriptural, it is against the tules of scripture; which say not a word of any such way of judging the state of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the fruits that are feen in them. And it is against the doctrines of scripture, which do plainly teach us, that the state of others fouls towards God cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, faving he that receiveth it.' And Rom. ii. 29. 'He is a Jew, which 'is one inwardly; and circumcifion is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God. 'That by this last expression, "whose praise is not of men, but of God," the apostle has respect to the insufficiency of men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a few or no, (as they could eafily fee by outward marks, whether men were outwardly Jews), and would fignify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining voice in this matter, is confirmed by the fame apostle's use of the phrase, in I Cor. iv. 5. 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God. The apostle, in the two foregoing verfes, fays, ' But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I · judge

'judge not mine own felf. For I know nothing by my'felf, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth
'me is the Lord.' And again, it is further confirmed,
because the apostle, in this second chapter to the Romans, directs his speech especially to those who had a
high conceit of their own holiness, made their boast of
God, and were consident of their own discerning, and
that they knew God's will, and approved the things
which were excellent, or tried the things that differ (as
it is in the margin) ver. 19. 'And were consident that
'they were guides of the blind, and a light to them
'which are in darkness, instructors of the soolish, teach'ers of babes; and so took upon them to judge others.'
See ver. 1. and 17. 18. 19. 20.

And how arrogant must the notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others godliness, when that great apostle Peter pretends not to say any more concerning Sylvanus, than that he was a faithful brother, as he supposed? 1 Pet. v. 12. Though this Selvanus appears to have been a very eminent minister of Christ, and an evangelist, and a famous light in God's church at that day, and an intimate companion of the apostles. See 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Thess. i. 1. and 2 Thess. i. 1.

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SHEWING WHAT ARE DISTINGUISHING SIGNS OF TRU-LY GRACIOUS AND HOLY APPECTIONS.

I Come now to the second thing appertaining to the trial of religious affections, which was proposed, viz. To take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give fuch figns of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to diffinguish true affection from false in others; or to determine positively which of their neighbours are true professors, and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given rules to all christians, to enable them to judge of profesfors of religion, whom they are concerned with, fo far asis necessary for their own fafety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion; and though it be also beyond doubt, that the scriptures do abound with rules, which may be very ferviceable to ministers, in counselling and conducting fouls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state; yet, it is also evident, that it was never God's defign to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow-professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats; but that, on the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end: for no more is ever to be expected from any signs, that are to be found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are sallen into a dead, carnal, and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design, (as has been already observed), that such should know their good estate: nor is it desirable that they should; but, on the contrary, every way best that they should not; and we have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state that they are in, any other way, than by first coming out of the ill frame and way they are in.

Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the figns given in the word of God, that every faint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every faint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for every, even the least act of grace is so. But it is through his defect to whom the figns are given. There is a twofold defect in that faint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him. First, a defect in the object, or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I do not mean an effential defect; because I suppose the person to be a real saint; but a defect in degree: grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished.

Things that are very small, we cannot clearly difcern their form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: but yet if we should view the different embryos, it might not be posfible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very contrary qualities, is not fo plainly to be feen while they are very young, even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another defect attending the grace of those I am speaking, is its being mingled with fo much corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different things that are before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we fee them only in a thick smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear fky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference. When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an affured hope.

Secondly, There is in such a case a defect in the eye. As the feebleness of grace and prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the fight; it darkens the fight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colours from those which properly belong to them, and like many other distempers, that put the mouth out of taste, so as to disenable from distinguishing good and wholesome food

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from bad, but every thing tastes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but poor plight for judging and distinguishing spiritual

things.

For these reasons, no signs that can be given, will actually fatisfy persons in such a case: let the signs that are given be never fo good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not ferve them. It is like giving a man rules, how to diffinguish visible objects in the dark; the things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is infufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labour, in poring on past experiences, and examining themfelves by figns they hear laid down from the pulpit, or that they read in books; when there is other work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their felf-examinations are like to be in vain, if they should spend never so much time in them. The accurfed thing is to be destroyed from their camp, and Achan to be flain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain affurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it. And although felfexamination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal means, by which the faints do get fatisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by self-examination, as by action. The apostle Paul fought affurance chiefly this way, even by 'forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the ' mark for the prize of the high calling of God in ' Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the refurrection of the dead.' And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained affurance, I Cor. ix. 26. I therefore fo run, as not uncertainly.' He obtained M affurance

affurance of winning the prize, more by running, than by considering. The swiftness of his pace, did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the strictness of his examination. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to saith, virtue, &c. is the direction that the apostle Peter gives us, for 'making our calling and election sure, and having an entrance ministred to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting kingdom; signifying to us, that without this, our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark, that cannot plainly see things past or to come, either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is suture, and far off, 2 Pet. i. 5.—11.*

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits may be very useful to them to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or as supposing they should be the principle means of their sa-

tisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, in the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false

* The way to know your godlines, is to renew the vifible exercises of grace.—The more the visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your assurance will be.

The more mens grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multi"plied unto you, through the knowledge of God and Je"fus Christ our Lord." Stoddard's Way to know fincerity
and bypocrify, p. 139. and 142.

are:

false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in a false confidence, and high conceit of their own suppofed great experiences and privileges. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great felf-righteousness, (but very fubtil and fecret, under the difguise of great humility, and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit, of their great exaltation, that it usually fignifies nothing at all, to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrify. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this fort of persons seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction and repentance. But yet the laying down good rules may be a means of preventing such hypocrites, and of convincing many of other kinds of hypocrites: and God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. And besides, fuch rules may be of use to the true saints, to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true; and be a means of their religion's becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious: affections are distinguished from false.

I. Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arile from those influences and operations on the heart, which are spiritual, supernatural, and divine.

I will explain what I mean by these terms, whence will appear their use to distinguish between those affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so.

We find that true faints, or those persons who are fanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New Testament called spiritual persons. And their being spiritual. is spoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not fanctified. This is evident, because those who are spiritual M 2

are fet in opposition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the spiritual man and the natural man are fet in opposition one to another, I Cor. ii. 14. 15. 'The na-' tural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can · he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things.' The scripture explains itself to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace, by a natural man: thus the apostle Jude, speaking of certain ungodly men, that had crept in unawares among the faints, ver. 4. of his epiftle, fays, ver. 19. 'These are sensual, having not the Spirit.' This the apostle gives us a reason why they behaved themselves in such a wicked manner as he had described. Here the word translated fenfual, in the original is Psychikoi; which is the very same, which in those verses in I Cor. chap. ii. is translated natural. In the like manner, in the continuation of the fame discourse, in the next verse but one, spiritual men are opposed to carnal men; which the connection plainly shews mean the same, as spiritual men and natural men, in the foregoing verses; 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal;' i. e. as in a great measure unsanctified. That by carnal the apostle means corrupt and unfanctified, is abundantly evident, by Rom. vii. 25. and viii. 1. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 12. 13. Gal. v. 16. to the end. Col. ii. 18. Now therefore, if by natural and carnal, in these texts, he intended unfanctified, then doubtless by spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is meant fanctified and gracious.

And as the faints are called spiritual in scripture, so we also find that there are certain properties, qualities, and principles, that have the same epithet given them. So we read of a 'spiritual mind,' Rom. viii. 6. 7. and of 'spiritual wisdom,' Col. i. 9. and of 'spiritual bles-

' fings,' Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be observed, that the epithet spiritual, iu these and other parallel texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify any relation of persons or things to

the spirit or soul of man, as the spiritual part of man, in opposition to the body, which is the material part. Qualities are not faid to be spiritual, because they have their feat in the foul, and not in the body: for there are some properties that the scripture calls carnal or fleshly, which have their feat as much in the foul, as those properties that are called fpiritual. Thus it is with pride and felf-righteousness, and a man's trusting to his own wifdom, which the apostle calls fleshly, Col. ii. 18. Nor are things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those things that are immaterial, and not corpo-For fo was the wisdom of the wife men, and princes of this world, conversant about spirits, and immaterial beings; which yet the apostle speaks of as natural men, totally ignorant of those things that are spiritual, I Cor. chap. ii. But it is with relation to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, that persons or things are termed spiritual in the New Testament. Spirit, as the word is used to fignify the third person in the Trinity, is the substantive, of which is formed the adjective spiritual, in the holy scriptures, . Thus Christians are called spiritual persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the indwelling and holy influences of the Spirit of God in them. And things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Cor. ii. 13. 14. 'Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy ' Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spi-' ritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.' Here the apostle himself expressly fignifies, that by spiritual things, he means the things of the Spirit of God, and things which the Holy Ghoft teacheth. The fame is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole context. Again, Rom. viii. 6. To be carnally minded, is death; to be spiritually minded, is life and peace. The apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded, in what follows in the 9th verse, and shews that by being spiritually minded, he means a having the indwelling and M: 3 holy? holy influences of the Spirit of God in the heart. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. The same is evident by all the context. But time would fail to produce all the evidence there is of this, in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with relation to the Spirit of God and his influences, that persons and things are called spiritual; yet not all those persons who are subject to any kind of influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called spiritual in the New Testament. They who have only the common influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the places cited above, but only those who have the special, gracious, and faving influences of God's Spirit; as is evident, because it has been already proved, that by spiritual men is meant godly men, in opposition to natural, carnal, and unfanctified men. And it is most plain, that the apostle by spiritually minded, Rom. viii. 6. means graciously minded. And though the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which natural men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet natural men, whatever gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the usual language of the New Testament, called spiritual persons. For it was not by men's having the gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the virtues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent, by Gal. vi. 1. ' Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the fpirit of meekness.' Meekness is one of those virtues which the apostle had just spoken of, in the verses next preceding, shewing what are the fruits of the Spirit. Those qualifications are faid to be spiritual in the language of the New Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the faints.

Thus when we read of spiritual wisdom and underdanding, (as in Col. i. 9. We defire that ye may be filled. filled with the knowledge of his will,' in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;) hereby is intended that wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtless, by spiritual wisdom is meant that which is opposite to what the scripture calls natural wisdom; as the spiritual man is opposed to the natural man. And therefore spiritual wisdom is doubtless the same with that wisdom which is from above, that the apostle James speaks of, Jam. iii. 17. 'The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle,' &c. for this the apostle opposes to natural wisdom, ver. 15. 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual'—the last word in the original is the same that is translated natural, in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural men may be the subjects of many influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many scriptures, as Numb. xxiv. 2. 1 Sam. x. 10. and xi. 6. and xvi. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. and many others; yet they are not, in the sense of the scripture, spiritual persons; neither are any of those effects, common gifts, qualities, or affections, that are from the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual things. The great difference lies in these

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1. The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode; and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature, or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action. The scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the saints, but as dwelling in them as his temple, his proper abode, and everlasting dwelling-place, 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. John xiv. 16. 17. And he is represented as being there so united to the faculties of the soul, that he becomes there a principle or spring of new nature and life.

So the faints are faid to live by Christ living in them,

Gal. ii. 20. Christ by his Spirit not only is in them, but lives in them; and so that they live by his life; so is his spirit united to them, as a principle of life in them; they do not only drink living water, but this 'living water becomes a well or fountain of water,' in the foul, ' fpringing up into spiritual and everlasting life,' John iv. 14. and thus becomes a principle of life in them: this living water, this evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, Chap. vii. 38. 39. light of the Sun of righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is fo communicated to them that they fhine also, and become little images of that Sun which fhines upon them; the fap of the true vine is not only conveyed into them, as the fap of a tree may be conveyed into a veffel, but is conveyed as fap is from a tree into one of its living branches, where it becomes a The Spirit of God being thus comprinciple of life. municated and united to the faints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called spiritual.

On the other hand, though the Spirit of God may many ways influence natural men; yet because it is not: thus communicated to them, as an indwelling principle, they do not derive any denomination or character fromit; for there being no union, it is not their own. The light may shine upon a body that is very dark or black; and though that body be the subject of the light, yet, because the light becomes no principle of light in it, so as to cause the body to shine, hence that body does not properly receive its denomination from it, fo as to be called a lightfome body. So the Spirit of God acting upon the foul only, without communicating itself to be an active principle in it, cannot denominate it spiritual. A body that continues black, may be faid not to have light, though the light shines upon it: so natural men are faid 'not to have the Spirit,' Jude 19. fensual or natural, (as the word is elsewhere rendered), having

not the Spirit.

2. Another reason why the saints and their virtues

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are called spiritual, (which is the principal thing), is, that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital principle in their fouls, there produces those effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own proper nature. Holiness is the nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in scripture the Holy Ghost. Holiness, which is as it were the beauty and sweetness of the divine nature, is as much the proper nature of the Holy Spirit, as heat is the nature of fire, or fweetness was the nature of that holy anointing oil, which was the principal type of the Holy Ghost in the Mosaic dispensation; yea, I may rather fay, that holinefs is as much the proper nature of the Holy Ghost, as sweetness was the nature of the sweet odour of that ointment. The Spirit of God fo dwells in the hearts of the faints, that he there, as a feed or spring of life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine nature, making the foul a partaker of God's beauty and Christ's joy, so that the faint has truly fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the communion or participation of the Holy Ghost. The grace which is in the hearts of the faints, is of the fame nature with the divine holinefs, as much as it is possible for that holiness to be, which is infinitely less in degree; as the brightness that is in a diamond which the fun shines upon, is of the same nature with the brightness of the sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in degree. Therefore Christ says, John iii. 6. That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; i. e. the grace that is begotten in the hearts of the faints, is fomething of the same nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a spiritual nature; after the same manner as that which is born of the flesh is slesh, or that which is born of corrupt nature is corrupt nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the minds of natural men after this manner. Though he may influence them many ways, yet he never, in any of his influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his nature, either on the minds of faints or finners; but the Spi-

rit of God may act upon men agreeably to his own nature, and not exert his proper nature in the acts and exercises of their minds: the Spirit of God may act so, that his actions may be agreeable to his nature, and yet may not at all communicate himself in his proper nature, in the effect of that action. Thus, for instance, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his nature in that action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that action, there was nothing of the proper nature of the Holy Spirit in that motion of the waters. And so he may act upon the minds of men many ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate things.

Thus not only the manner of the relation of the Spirit, who is the operator, to the subject of his operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the faints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding principle of action, whereas he doth not so operate upon finners; but the influence and operation itself is different, and the effect wrought exceeding different. So that not only the persons are called spiritual, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those qualifications, affections, and experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also spiritual, and therein differ vastly in their nature and kind from all that a natural man is or can be the subject of, while he remains in a natural state; and also from all that men or devils can be the authors of. It is a spiritual work in this high fense; and therefore above all other works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no work so high and excellent; for there is no work wherein God doth fo much communicate himself, and wherein the mere creature hath, in fo high a fense, a participation of God; so that it is expressed in scripture by the faints being made partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4. and 'having God dwelling in them, and they in God,' I John iv. 12. 15. 16. and chap. iii. 21. and having Christ in them,' John xvii. 21. Rom. viii. 10. ' being the temples of the living God,' 2 Cor. vi. 16. ' living by Christ's life,' Gal. ii. 20. 'being made partakers of God's holinefs,

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holiness,' Heb. xii. 10. ' having Christ's love dwelling in them,' John xvii. 26. 'having his joy fulfilled in them, John xvii. 13. ' feeing light in God's light, and being made to drink of the river of God's pleasures,' Psal. xxxvi. 8. o. 'having fellowship with God, or communicating and partaking with him,' (as the word fignifies), I John i. 3. Not that the faints are made partakers of the effence of God, and so are godded with God, and christed with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous language and notions of some heretics; but, to use the scripture phrase, they are made partakers of God's fulness, Eph. iii. 17. 18. 19. John i. 16. that is, of God's spiritual beauty and happiness, according to the measure and capacity of a creature; for so it is evident the word fulness fignifies in scripture-language. Grace in the hearts of the faints, being therefore the most glorious work of God, wherein he communicates of the goodness of his nature, it is doubtless his peculiar work, and in an eminent manner, above the power of all creatures. And the influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a manner, communicate himself, and make the creature partaker of the divine nature, (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper nature); this is what I mean by those influences that are divine, when I fay that ' truly gracious affections do arise from those influences that are spiritual and divine.'

The true faints only have that which is spiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the sense that has been spoken of. They not only have not these communications of the Spirit of God in so high a degree as the saints, but have nothing of that nature or kind. For the apostle James tells us, that natural men have not the Spirit; and Christ teaches the necessity of a new birth, or of being born of the Spirit, from this, that he that is born of the sless, has only sless, and no spirit, John iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any degree; for the apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are some of his, Rom. viii,

9 .- II. And an having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain fign that persons shall have the eternal inheritance; for it is spoken of as the earnest of it, 2 Cor.i. 22. and v. 5. Eph. i. 14.: and an having any thing of the Spirit is mentioned as a fure fign of being in Chrift, I John iv. 13. ' Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' Ungodly men, not only have not fo much of the divine nature as the faints, but they are not partakers of it; which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being partaker of the divine nature is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the true faints, 2 Pet. i. 4. Ungodly men are not ' partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. A natural man has no experience of any of those things that are spiritual: the apostle teaches us, that he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect stranger to them, the talk about fuch things is all foolishness and nonsense to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Cor. ii. 14. natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of 'God; for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' And to the like purpose Christ teaches us that the world is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John xiv. 17. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. And it is further evident, that natural men have nothing in them of the same nature with the true grace of the faints, because the apostle teaches us, that those of them who go farthest in religion, have no charity, or true Christian love, I Cor. chap. xiii. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharifees, those high pretenders to religion, that they ' had not the love of God in them,' John v. 42. Hence natural men have no communion or fellowship with Christ, or participation with him, (as these words signify), for this is spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the faints, J John i. 3. together with ver. 6. 7. and 1 Cor. i. 8. 9. And the scripture speaks of the actual being of a gracious principle in the foul, though in its first beginning, as a feed there planted, as inconfiftent with a man's being a

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And natural men are represented in scripture, as having no spiritual light, no spiritual life, and no spiritual being; and therefore conversion is often compared to opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead, and a work of creation, (wherein creatures are made entirely new), and becoming new-born children.

From these things it is evident, that those gracious influences which the saints are the subjects of, and the effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above nature, altogether of a different kind from any thing that men find within themselves by nature, or only in the exercise of natural principles; and are things which no improvement of those qualifications, or principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher degrees, and no kind of composition of them, will ever bring men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every thing that natural men experience, in degree and circumstances, but also in kind; and are of a nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean by supernatural, when I say that gracious affections are from those influences that are supernatural.

From hence it follows, that in those gracious exercises and affections which are wrought in the minds of the faints, through the faving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or fensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from any thing that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were fanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty power produces fomething that is new, not only in degree and circumstances, but in its whole nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying, or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any thing of the like kind; I fay, if God produces fomething thus new in a mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious thing; then doubtless something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same thing, there is some new sensation or perception of the mind, which is entirely of a new fort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying,

or compounding of that kind of perceptions or fensations which the mind had before; or there is what some metaphyficians call a new fimple idea. If grace be, in the fense above described, an entirely new kind of principle, then the exercises of it are also entirely a new kind of exercises. And if there be in the foul a new fort of exercifes which it is conscious of, which the soul knew nothing of before, and which no improvement, compofition, or management of what it was before conscious or fensible of, could produce, or any think like it; then it follows, that the mind has an entirely new kind of perception or fensation: and here is, as it were, a new spiritual fense that the mind has, or a principle of new kind of perception or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of fensation of the mind, as tafting is diverse from any of the other fenfes; and fomething is perceived by a true faint, in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely diverse from any thing that is perceived in them, by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men of honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the spiritual perceptions which a fanctified and spiritual person has, are not only diverse from all that natural men have, after the manner that the ideas or perceptions of the same fense may differ one from another, but rather as the ideas and fensations of different senses do differ. Hence the work of the Spirit of God in regeneration is often in scripture compared to the giving a new sense, giving eyes to fee, and ears to hear, unstopping the ears of the deaf, and opening the eyes of them that were born blind, and turning from darkness unto light. And because this spiritual sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other principles of perception, and all our faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving this new fense, with the bleffed fruits and effects of it in the foul, is compared to a raifing the dead, and to a new creation.

This new spiritual sense, and the new dispositions that

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attend it, are no new faculties, but are new principles of nature. I use the word principles, for want of a word of a more determinate fignification. By a principle of nature in this place, I mean that foundation which is laid in nature, either old or new, for any particular manner or kind of exercise of the faculties of the foul; or a natural habit, or foundation for action, giving a person ability and disposition to exert the faculties in exercises of such a certain kind; so that to exert the faculties in that kind of exercises, may be faid to be his nature. So this new spiritual sense is not a new faculty of understanding, but it is a new foundation laid in the nature of the foul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faeulty of understanding. So that new holy disposition of heart that attends this new fense, is not a new faculty of will, but a foundation laid in the nature of the foul, for a new kind of exercises of the same faculty of will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impreffes, affilts, improves, or some way acts upon natural principles; but gives no new spiritual principle. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did Balaam, he only impresses a natural principle, viz. the fense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gives no new fense; neither is there any thing fupernatural, spiritual, or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the lenfes, either voices, or shapes and colours, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and fenses. So if God reveals to any natural man any fecret fact; as, for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercifing any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by fight and hearing. So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of finners, he only affifts natural principles to do the N 2

fame work to a greater degree, which they do of themfelves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may affift men's natural ingeniofity, as he affisted Bezaleel and Aholiab in the curious works of the tabernacle: so he may affift men's natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage, and other natural qualifications, as he is faid to have put his spirit on the seventy elders, and on Saul, so as to give him another heart: fo God may greatly affift natural men's reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and. notions of things of religion in many respects, without giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only affifts. conscience, which is a natural principle, to do that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Confcience naturally gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution : the Spirit of God affilts men's consciences to do this in a greater degree. helps conscience against the stupifying influence of worldly objects and their lusts. And so there are many other ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, affifts, and moves natural principles; but after all, it is no more than nature moved, acted, and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of. God in his spiritual influences on the hearts of his saints, operates by infuling or exercifing new, divine, and fupernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new. and spiritual nature, and principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious affections are attended with, and do arise from some apprehension, idea, or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea exceeding different, from all that is or can be in the mind of a natural man; and which the natural man discerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of, (agreeable to 1 Cor.

ii. 14.) and conceives of no more than a man without the fense of tasting can conceive of the sweet taste of honey, or a man without the fense of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune, or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.

But here two things must be observed, in order to the

right understanding of this.

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1. On the one hand it must be observed, that not every thing which in any respect appertains to spiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men can conceive of, and do experience; some things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumstances, appendages, and effects are common. Thus a faint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation: love to God makes a man have defires of the honour of God, and a defire to pleafe him; fo does a natural man's love to his friend make him defire his honour, and defire to please him: love to God causes a man to delight in the thoughts of God, and to delight in the presence of God, and to defire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of God; and so it is with a man's love to his friend: and many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that idea which the faint has of the loveliness of God, and that fensation, and that kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quinteffence of his love, is pecuhar, and entirely diverse from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in those things that feem to be common, there is something peculiar: both spiritual and natural, cause desires after the object beloved; but they be not the same fort of delires: there is a fensation of foul in the spiritual defires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural defires: both spiritual love and natural love are attended with delight in the object beloved; but the fensations of delight are not the fame, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural men may have conceptions N 3

of many things about spiritual affections; but there is somes thing in them which is as it were the nucleus, or kernel of them, that they have no more conceptions of than one born blind has of colours.

It may be clearly illustrated by this: we will suppose two men; one is born without the fense of tasting, the other has it; the latter loves honey, and is greatly delighted in it, because he knows the sweet taste of it; the other loves certain founds and colours: the love of each has many things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to defire and delight in the object beloved, and causes grief when it is absent, &c. but yet that idea or fensation which he who knows the taste: of honey has of its excellency and fweetness, that is the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have; and that delight which he has in honey, is wholly diverfe from any thing that the other can conceive of, though they both delight in their beloved objects. So both these persons may in fome respects love the same object: the one may love a delicious kind of fruit, which is beautiful to the eye, and of a delicious taffe; not only because he has seen its pleafant colours, but knows its fweet taffe; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful colours: there are many things feen, in some respect, to be common to both; both love, both defire, and both delight; but the love, and delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural man and spiritual man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that: in one respect it is vastly greater, viz. that the kinds of excellency which are perceived in spiritual objects, by these different kinds of persons, are in themselves vastly more diverle than the different kinds of excellency perceived in delicious fruit, by a tasting and a tasteless man; and in another respect it may not be so great, viz. as the spiritual man may have a spiritual sense or taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellency, but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed, that a na-

tural man may have those religious apprehensions and affections, which may be in many respects very new and furprifing to him, and what before he did not conceive: of; and yet if what he experiences be nothing like the exercises of a principle of new nature, or the sensations of a new spiritual sense; his affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural principles, in a very new degree, and with a great many new circumstances, and a new co-operation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas; this may be from some extraordinary powerful influence of Satan, and some great delusion; but there is nothing but nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor man, that had always dwelt in a cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should in a jest be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and there arrayed in princely robes, and fet in the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him. and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch; the ideas he would have, and the affections he would experience, would in many respects be very new, and fuch as he had no imagination of before; but all is no more, than only extraordinarily raifing and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying, and compounding fuch fort of ideas, as he has by nature; here is nothing like giving him a new fenfe.

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections do arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that sensible effect or sensation in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that is possible a natural manishould experience, not only different in degree and circumstances, but different in its whole nature; so that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceeding diverse, and immensely below it, in its kind; and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any thing of

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naural I have infifted largely on this matter, because it is of

great importance and use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the delusions of Satan, in many kinds of salse religious affections, which multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; and to settle and determine many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.

Now, therefore, to apply these things to the purpose

of this discourse.

From hence it appears, that impressions which some have made on their imagination, or the imaginary ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any part of gracious experience.

Here, for the fake of common people, I will explain what is intended by impressions on the imagination, and imaginary ideas. The imagination is that power of the mind whereby it can have a conception, or idea of things of an external or outward nature, (that is, of fuch fort of things as are the objects of the outward fenses,) when those things are not present, and be not perceived by the fenses. It is called imagination from the word image; because thereby a person can have an image of fome external thing in his mind, when that thing is not present in reality, nor any thing like it. All such kind of things as we perceive by our five external fenfes, feeing, hearing, fmelling, tafting, and feeling, are external things: and when a person has an idea, or image of any of these forts of things in his mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really fee, hear, fmell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an imagination of them, and these ideas are imaginary ideas: and when fuch kind of ideas are strongly impressed upon the mind, and the image of them in the mind is very lively, almost as if one faw them, or heard them, &c. that is called an impression on the imagination. Thus colours, and shapes,

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and a form of countenance, they are outward things; because they are that fort of things which are the objects of the outward fense of seeing : and therefore when any person has in his mind a lively idea of any shape, or eolour, or form of countenance; that is to have an imagination of those things. So if he has an idea, of such fort of light or darkness, as he percieves by the sense of feeing; that is to have an idea of outward light, and fo is an imagination. So if he has an idea of any marks made on paper, suppose letters and words written in a book; that is to have an external and imaginary idea of such kind of things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily eyes. And when we have the ideas of that kind of things which we perceive by any of the other fenfes, as of any founds or voices, or words spoken; this is only to have ideas of outward things, viz. of fuch kind of things as are perceived by the external fense of hearing, and so that also is imagination: and when these ideas are livelily impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the ears, this is to have an impression on the imagination, And to I might go on, and instance in the ideas of things appertaining to the other three fenses of imelling, tafting, and feeling.

Many who have had fuch things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the nature of spiritual disco-They have had lively ideas of some external shape, and beautiful form of countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them ideas of a great outward light; and this they call a spiritual discovery of God's or Christ's glo-Some have had ideas of Christ's hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; and this they call a spiritual fight of Christ crucified, and the way of falvation by his blood. Some have feen him with his arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a discovery of the sufficiency of Christ's grace and love. Some have had lively ideas of heaven, and of Christ on his throne there, and shining ranks of faints and angels; and this they call feeing heaven opened to

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them. Some from time to time have had a lively idear of a person of a beautiful countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual discovery of the love of Christ to their souls, and tasting the love of Christ. And they look upon it a fufficient evidence that thefe things are spiritual discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these things with their bodily eyes, but in their hearts; for they can fee them when their eyes are shut. And in like manner, the imaginations of some have been impressed with ideas of the fense of hearing; they have had ideas of words, as if they were fpoke to them, fometimes they are the words of scripture, and sometimes other words: they have had ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable words to them. Thefe things they have called having the inward call of Christ, hearing the voice of Christ spiritually in their hearts, having the witness of the Spirit, and the inward testimony of the love of Christ, &c.

The common, and less considerate and understanding fort of people, are the more eafily led into apprehensions. that thefe things are spiritual things, because spiritual things being invisible, and not things that can be pointed forth with the finger, we are forced to use figurative expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow names from external and fenfible objects to fignify them by. Thus we call a clear apprehension of things spiritual by the name of light; and an having fuch an apprehension of fuch or fuch things, by the name of feeing fuch things; and the conviction of the judgment, and the perfuation of the will, by the word of Christ in the gospel, we signify by spiritually hearing the call of Christ: and the fcripture itself abounds with such like figurative expresfions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the necessity of having their eyes opened, and having a discovery of spiritual things, and seeing Christ in his glory, and having the inward call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external discoveries, and imaginary views as have been spoken of; and when they have them, are confident that

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now their eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their deliverance and happiness, and many kinds of affections are at once set in a violent motion in them.

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But it is exceeding apparent that fuch ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious experiences are spiritual and divine. These external ideas are in nowife of fuch a fort, that they are entirely, and in their whole nature diverse from all that men have by nature, perfectly different from, and vally above any fensation which it is possible a man should have by any natural sense or principle, so that in order to have them, a man must have a new spiritual and divine sense given him, in order to have any sensations of that fort ; fo far from this, that they are ideas of the fame fort which we have by the external fenses, that are some of the inferior powers of the human nature; they are merely ideas of external objects, or ideas of that nature, of the same outward sensitive kind; the same fort of sensations of mind (differing not in degree, but only in circumftances) that we have by those natural principles which are common to us with the bealts, viz. the five external fenses. This is a low, miserable notion of spiritual fense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that fort of ideas which we have by our animal fenses, which fenses the beafts have in as great perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine nature in the foul, into a mere animal. There is nothing wanting in the foul, as it is by nature, to render it capable of being the subject of all these external ideas, without any new principles. A natural man is capable of having an idea, and a lively idea of shapes, and colours, and founds when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate man is: fo there is nothing fupernatural in them. And it is known by abundant experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human nature, which makes persons more capable of having

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ving such lively and strong imaginary ideas, but that on the contrary, the weakness of body and mind, and distempers of body, makes persons abundantly more suf-

ceptive of fuch impressions*.

As to a truly spiritual sensation, not only is the manner of its coming into the mind extraordinary, but the Tenfation itself is totally diverse from all that men have, or can have, in a state of nature, as has been shewn. But as to these external ideas, though the way of their coming into the mind is fometimes unufual, yet the ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are ftill of no different fort from what men have by their fenses; they are of no higher kind, nor a whit better. For instance, the external idea a man has now of Christ hanging on the cross, and shedding his blood, is no better in itself, than the external idea that the Jews his enemies had, who flood round his crofs, and faw this with their bodily eyes. The imaginary idea which men have now of an external brightness and glory of God, is no better than the idea the wicked congregation in the wilderness had of the external glory of the Lord at mount Sinai, when they faw it with their bodily eyes; or any better than that idea which millions of curfed reprobates will have of the external glory of Christ at the day of judgement, who shall see, and have a very lively idea of ten thousand times greater external glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any man's imagina-

^{*} a Conceits and whimfies abound most in men of weak reason; children, and such as are cracked in their understanding, have most of them; strength of reason banishes them, as the sun does mists and vapours. But now the more rational any gracious person is, by so much more is he fixed and settled, and satisfied in the grounds of religion; yea, there is the highest and purest reason in religion; and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way, Is. i. 18. John xix. 9." Flavel's Preparation for Sufferings, Chap. vi.

imagination *: yea, the image of Christ, which men conceive in their imaginations, is not in its own nature, of any superior kind to the idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting images of him which they see in their churches; (though the way of their receiving the idea may not be so bad;) nor are the affections they have, if built primarily on such imaginations, any better than the affections raised in the ignorant people, by the sight of those images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these images, through the craft of the priests, are made to move, and speak, and weep, and the like †. Merely the way of persons re-

* " If any man should see, and behold Christ really, immediately this is not the faving knowledge of him, I know the faints do know Christ as if immediately present; they are not strangers by their distance : if others have seen him more immediately, I will not dispute it. But if they have feen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernaum faw him fo; nay some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John vi. And yet the Lord was hid from their eyes. Nay, all the world shall see him in his glory, which shall amaze them; and yet this is far thort of having the faving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect. So that though you fee the Lord fo really, as that you become familiar with him, yet, Luke xiii. 26. "Lord, have we not eat and drank," &c .- and fo perish. Shepards Par. of the Ten Virgins, P. I. p. 197. 198.

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† "Satan is transformed into an angel of light: and hence we have heard that some have heard voices; some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side; some have seen a great light shining in the chamber; some wonderfully affected with their dreams; some in great distress have had inward witness, "Thy fins are forgiven;" and hence such liberty and joy, that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O adulterous generation! this is natural and usual with men, they would fain see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence Papills have his images.—Wo to them that have no other manifested Christ, but such an an one."

Shepards Par. of the Ten Virgins, P. I. p. 198.

ceiving these imaginary ideas, do not alter the nature of the ideas themselves that are received: let them be received in what way they will, they are still but external ideas, or ideas of outward appearances, and fo are not fpiritual. Yea, if men should actually receive such external ideas by the immediate power of the most high God upon their minds, they would not be spiritual, they should be no more than a common work of the Spirit of God: as is evident in fact, in the instance of Balaam. who had impressed on his mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward representation or idea of Jesus Christ. as ' the Star rifing out of Jacob, when he heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most ' High, and faw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance,' Numb. xxiv. 16. 17. but yet had no manner of spiritual discovery of Christ; that Day-star never spiritually rose in his heart, he being but a natural man.

And as these external ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their nature, and nothing but what natural men, without any new principles, are capable of; fo there is nothing in their nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled exercise of the glorious power of God, in order to their production, which it has been shewn there is in the production of true grace. There appears to be nothing in their nature above the power of the devil. It is certainly not above the power of Satan to fuggest thoughts to men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to sin. And if he can fuggest any thoughts or ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or ideas of things external, are not above his power +; for the external ideas men have are the lowest fort of ideas. These ideas may be raised only

^{† &}quot;Consider how difficult, yea and impossible it is to determine that such a voice, vision, or revelation is of God, and that Satan cannot feign or counterfeit it; seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another." Flavel's Causes and cures of mental terrors, Cause 14.

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by impressions made on the body, by moving the animal spirits, and impressing the brain. Abundant experience does certainly show, that alterations in the body will excite imaginary or external ideas in the mind; as often, in case of a high sever, melancholy, &c. These external ideas are as much below the more intellectual exercises of the soul, as the body is a less noble part of man than the soul.

And there is not only nothing in the nature of thefe external ideas or imaginations of outward appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the power of the devil; but it is certain also that the devil can excite, and often bath excited fuch ideas. They were external ideas which he excited in the dreams and vifions of the false prophets of old, who were under the influence of lying spirits, that we often read of in scripture, as Deut. xiii. I. I Kings xxii. 23 If. xxviii. 7. Ezek. xiii. 74 And they were external ideas that he often excited in the minds of the heathen priefts, magicians and forcerers in their visions and ecstaties, and they were external ideas that he excited in the mind of the man Christ Jesus, when he shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them, when those kingdoms were not really in fight.

And if Satan, or any created being, has power to impress the mind with outward representations, then no particular fort of outward representations can be any evidence of a divine power. Almighty power is no more requisite to represent the shape of man to the imagination, than the shape of any thing else: there is no higher kind of power necessary to form in the brain one bodily shape or colour than another: it needs a no more glorious power to represent the form of the body of man, than the form of a chip or block; though it be of a very beautiful human body, with a sweet smile in his countenance, or arms open, or blood running from hands, feet, and side: that fort of power which can represent white and shining brightness: the power and skill which

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can well and exactly paint a straw, or a stick of wood, on a piece of paper or canvas; the fame in kind, only perhaps further improved, will be fufficient to paint the body of a man, with great beauty and in royal majesty, or a magnificent city, paved with gold, full of brightness, and a glorious throne, &c. So it is no more than the fame fort of power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the brain. The same fort of power that can put ink upon paper, can put on leaf-gold. So that it is evident to a demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the devil's power to make any fort of external representation at all on the fancy, (as without doubt it is, and never any one questioned it who believed there was a devil, that had any agency with mankind); I fay, if fo, it is demonstrably evident, that a created power may extend to all kinds of external appearances and ideas in the mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no fuch things have any thing in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the fense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious experiences have. And though external ideas, through man's make and frame, do ordinarily in some degree attend spiritual experiences, yet these ideas are no part of their spiritual experience, any more than the motion of the blood, and beating of the pulse, that attends experiences, are a part of spiritual experience. And though undoubtedly, through men's infirmity in the present state, and especially through the weak constitution of some persons, gracious affections which are very strong, do excite lively ideas in the imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when persons affections are founded on imaginations, which is often the case, those affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those operations that are spiritual and divine.

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These imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal affections of men to an exceeding great height *: and no wonder,

* There is a remarkable passage of Mr John Smith, in his discourse on the shortness of a Pharisaic righteousness, p. 370. 371. of his felect discourses, describing that fort of religion which is built on fuch a foundation as I am here fpeaking of. I cannot forbear transcribing the whole of it. Speaking of a fort of Christians, whose life is nothing but a strong energy of fancy, he says, "Lest their religion might. too grofsly discover itself to be nothing else but a piece of art, there may be fometimes fuch extraordinary motions flirred up within them, which may prevent all their own thoughts, that they may feem to be a true operation of the divine life; when yet all this is nothing elfe but the energy of their own felf-love, touched with some fleshly apprehensions. of divine things, and excited by them. There are such things in our Christian religion, when a carnal, unhallowed mind takes the chair, and gets the expounding of them,may feem very delicious to the fleshly appetites of men; some doctrines and notions of free grace and justification, the magnificent titles of fons of God and heirs of heaven, ever flowing ffreams of joy and pleasure that bleffed fouls shall swim in to all eternity, a glorious paradise in the world to come, always fpringing up with well-scented and fragrant beauties, a new Jerusalem paved with gold, and befpingled with stars, comprehending in its valt circuit fuch numberless varieties, that a busy curiosity may spend itself about to all eternity. I doubt not but that fometimes the most slessly and earthly men, that sly in their ambition to the pomp of this world, may be for ravished with the conceits of fuch things as thefe, that they may feem to be madepartakers of the powers of the world to come. I doubt not but that they might be much exalted with them, as the fouls of crazed or diffracted persons seem to be sometimes, when their fancies play with those quick and nimble spirits, which a diffempered frame of body, and unnatural heat in their heads, beget within them. Thus may these blazing comets. rife up above the moon, and climb higher than the fun; which yet, because they have no folid consistence of their own, and are of a bafe and earthly alloy, will foon vanish: and fall down again, being only borne up by an external force. They may feem to themselves to have attained higher than those noble Christians that are gently moved by the natural force of true goodness: they seem to be pleniores 0.3

wonder, when the subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting persuasion, that they are divine manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes.

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Deo. (i. e. more full of God) than those that are really informed and actuated by the divine Spirit, and do move on fleadily and constantly in the way towards heaven. As the feed that was fown in stoney ground, grew up, and lengthened out its blade faster, than that which was fown in the good and fruitless foil. And as the motions of our sense, and fancy, and passions, while our souls are in this mortal condition, funk down deeply into the body, are many times. more vigorous, and make stronger impressions upon us, than those of the higher powers of the foul, which are more subtle, and remote from these mixt animal perceptions: that devotion which is there feated, may feem to have more energy and life in it, than that which gently, and with a more delicate kind of touch, spreads itself upon the understanding, and from thence mildly derives it felf through our wills and affections. But however the former may be more boisterous for a time, yet this is of a more consistent, sper-matical, and thriving nature. For that proceeding indeed. from nothing but a fenfual and fleshly apprehension of God' and true happinels, is but of a flitting and fading nature; and as the fentible powers and faculties grow more languid. or the fun of divine light fhines more brightly upon us, thefe earthly devotions, like our culinary fires, will abate their heat and fervour. But a true celestial warmth will never be extinguished, because it is of an immortal nature; and heing once feated vitally in the fouls of men, it will regulate and order all the motions of it in a due manner, as the natural heat, radicated in the hearts of living creatures, hath. the dominion and economy of the whole body under it. True religion is no piece of artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative powers, nor the glowing heats of passion; though these are too often mistaken for it; when in our jugglings in religion we calt a mist before our own eyes: but it is a new nature, informing the fouls of men; it is a Godlike frame of spirit, discovering itself most of all in serene and clear minds, in deep humility, meekness, self-denial universal love to God and all true goodness, without partiality, and without hypocrify, whereby we are taught to know God, and knowing him to love him, and conform. ourselves as much as may be to all that persection which thines in him.

to their fouls, therein giving them testimonies, in an extraordinary manner, of his high and peculiar favour.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the manner in which gracious operations and effects in the heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine that the immediate suggesting of the words of scripture to the mind, has nothing in it which is spiritual.

I have had occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it; but if the reader bears in mind what has been said concerning the nature of spiritual instuences and effects, it will be more abundantly manifest that this is no spiritual effect. For I suppose there is no person of common understanding, who will say or imagine, that the bringing words (let them be what words they will) to the mind, is an effect of that nature which it is impossible the mind of a natural man, while he remains in a state of nature, should be the subject of, or any thing like it; or that it requires any new divine sense in the soul; or that the bringing sounds or letters to the mind, is an effect of so high, holy, and excellent a nature, that it is impossible any created power should be the cause of it.

As the suggesting words of scripture to the mind, is only the exciting in the mind ideas of certain founds or letters; fo it is only one way of exciting ideas in the imagination; for founds and letters are external things, that are the objects of the external fenfes of feeing and hearing. Ideas of certain marks upon paper, such asany of the twenty-four letters, in whatever order, or any founds of the voice, are as much external ideas, as of any other shapes or founds whatsoever: and therefore, by what has been already faid concerning thefe external ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any time the Spirit of God fuggests these letters or founds to the mind, this is a common, and not any fpecial or gracious influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those affections which have this effect for their foundation,

are no spiritual or gracious affections.—But let it be observed what it is that I say, viz. when this effect, even the immediate and extraordinary manner of words of scripture's coming to the mind; is that which excites the affections, and is properly the foundation of them, then these affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that persons may have gracious affections going with scriptures which come to their minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual sense, taste or relish they have of the divine and excellent things contained in those scriptures, that is the thing which excites their affections, and not the extraordinary and fudden manner of words being brought to their minds. They are affected with the instruction they receive from the words. and the view of the glorious things of God or Christ, and things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the words came suddenly, as though fome person had spoke them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this foundation; the words of some great and high promises of scripture came suddenly to their minds, and they look upon the words as directed immediately by God to them. as though the words that moment proceeded out of the mouth of God as spoken to them: so that they take it as a voice from God, immediately revealing to them. their happy circumstances, and promising such and such great things to them : and this it is that affects and ele-There is no new spiritual understanding vates them. of the divine things contained in the scripture, or new spiritual sense of the glorious things taught in that part of the Bible, going before their affection, and being the foundation of it: all the new understanding they have, or think they have, to be the foundation of their affection, is this, that the words are spoke to them, because they come so suddenly and extraordinarily. And so this affection is built wholly on the fand; because it is built on a conclusion for which they have no foundation.

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For, as has been shown, the fudden coming of the words to their minds, is no evidence that the bringing them to their minds in that manner, was from God. And if it was true that God brought the words to their minds, and they certainly knew it, that would not be fpiritual knowledge; it may be without any spiritual fense: Balaam might know that the words which God fuggested to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual knowledge. So that these affections which are built on that notion, that texts of scripture are fent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual foundation, and are vain and delufive. Persons who have their affections thus raifed, if they should be inquired of, whether they have any new fense of the excellency of things contained in those scriptures, would probably fay, Yes, without hesitation: but it is true no otherwife than thus, that when they have taken up that notion, that the words are spoken immediately to them, that makes them feem fweet to them, and they own the things which these scriptures say to them, for excellent things, and wonderful things. As for instance, Supposing these were the words which were suddenly brought to their minds, Fear not, -it is your Father's good pleafure to give you the kingdom; they having confidently taken up a notion that the words were as it were immediately spoken from heaven to them, as an immediate revelation, that God was their father, and had given the kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the words feem fweet to them; and oh, they fay, ' they are excellent things that are contained in those words!' But the reason why the promise seems. excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately : all the fense they have of any glory in them, is only from felf-love, and from their own imagined interest in the words: not that they had any view or fenfe of the holy and glorious nature of the kingdom of heaven, and the spiritual glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent grace to finful men, in offering and giving them this kingdom, of his own

good pleasure, preceding their imagined interest in these things, and their being affected by them, and being the soundation of their affection, and hope of an interest in them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own these things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary way of the scripture's coming to their mind, is plainly the first foundation of the whole; which is a clear evidence of the wretched

delufion they are under.

The first comfort of many persons, and what they call their conversion, is after this manner: after awakening and terrors, some comfortable sweet promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their minds; and the manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God to them: and this is the very thing that is all the foundation of their faith, and hope, and comfort: from bence they take their first encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promifed them eternal life, which is very abfurd; for every one of common knowledge of the principles of religion, knows that it is God's manner to reveal his love to men, and their interest in the promises, after they have believed, and not before, because they must first believe before they have any interest in the promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of truth and not of lies : he does not bring fcriptures to men's minds, to reveal to them that they have an interest in God's fayour and promifes, when they have none, having not yet believed: which would be the case, if God's bringing texts of scripture to men's minds, to reveal to them that their fins were forgiven, or that it was God's pleasure to give them the kingdom, or any thing of that nature, went before, and was the foundation of their first faith. There is no promise of the covenant of grace belongs to any man, until he has first believed Christ; for it is by faith alone that we become interefted

rested in Christ, and the promises of the new covenant made in him: and therefore whatever spirit applies the promises of that covenant to a person who has not first believed, as being already his, must be a lying spirit; and that faith which is first built on such an application of promises, is built upon a lie. God's manner is not to bring comfortable texts of scripture to give men assume of his love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a faith of dependence *. And if the

" Mr Stoddard in his Guide to Chrift, p. 8. fays, that " fometimes men, after they have been in trouble a while, have some promises come to them, with a great deal of refreshing; and they hope God has accepted them:" And fays, that, " In this case, the minister may tell them, that God never gives a faith of affurance before he gives a faith of dependence; for he never manifests his love, until men are in a state of favour and reconciliation, which is by faith of dependence. When men have comfortable scriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as tokens of God's love; but men must be brought into Christ, by accepting the offer of the gospel, before they are fit for such manifestations. God's method is, first to make the soul accept of the offers of grace, and then to manifest his good estate unto him." And p. 76. speaking of them "that seem to be brought to lie at God's foot, and give an account of their closing with Christ, and that God has revealed Christ to them, and drawn their hearts to him, and they do accept of Chrift," he fays, " In this case, it is best to examine whether by that light that was given him, he saw Christ and falvation offered to him, or whether he saw that God loved him, or pardoned him: for the offer of grace and our acceptance goes before pardon, and therefore, much more, before the knowledge of it."

Mr Shepard, in his Parable of the Ten Virgins, Part II. p. 15. fays, that "Grace and the love of Christ (the fairest colours under the sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive, under this appearance, that God witnesseth his love, first by an absolute promise, take heed there; for under this appearance you may as well bring in immediate revelations, and from thence come to forsake the scrip-

And in Part I. p. 86. he fays "Is Christ yours? Yes, I fee it. How? By any word or promise! No: this is delusion." and p. 136. speaking of them that have no solid

feripture which comes to a person's mind, be not so properly a promife, as an invitation; yet if he makes the fudden or unusual manner of the invitation's coming to his mind, the ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true faith; because it is built on that which is not the true ground of faith. True faith is built on no precarious foundation: but a determination that the words of such a particular text, were, by the immediate power of God, fuggested to the mind, at fuch a time, as though then spoken and directed by God to him, because the words came after such a manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious determination, as has been now shown; and therefore is a false and fandy foundation for faith; and accordingly that faith which is built upon it is false. The only certain foundation which any person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the bleffings of the gospel, is, that the word of God declares that persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it, is true and cannot lie If a finner be once convinced of the veracity of God, and that the scriptures are his word, he will need no more to convince and fatisfy him that he is invited; for the scriptures are full of invitations to sinners, to the chief of finners, to come and partake of the benefits of the gospel: he will not want any new speaking of God to him, what he hath spoken already will be enough with him.

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ground of peace, he reckons, "Those that content them-selves with the revelation of the Lord's love, without the fight of any work, or not looking to it" And says presently after, "The testimony of the Spirit does not make a man more a Cristian, but only evidenceth it; as it is the nature of a witness, not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it." And p. 140. speaking of them that say they have the witness of the Spirit, that makes a difference betwen them and hypocrites, he says, "The witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference: for first a man is a believer, and in Christ, and justified, called and fanctified, before the Spirit does witness it; else the Spirit should witness to an untruth and lie."

As the first comfort of many persons, and their affections at the time of their supposed conversion, are built on fuch grounds as thefe which have been mentioned; fo are their joys and hopes, and other affections, from time to time afterwards. They have often particular words of scripture, sweet declarations and promises suggested to them, which by reason of the manner of their coming, they think are immediately fent from God to them, at that time; which they look upon as their warrant to take them, and which they actually make the main ground of their appropriating them to themselves, and of the comfort they take in them, and the confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from time to time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their doubts, and testifies his love to them, and promises them supports and supplies, and his bleffing in such and fuch cases, and reveals to them clearly their interest in eternal bleffings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a course of a sudden and tumultuous kind of joys, mingled with a strong confidence, and high opinion of themselves; when indeed the main ground of these joys, and this confidence, is not any thing contained in, or taught by these scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the manner of their coming to them; which is a certain evidence of their delusion. There is no particular promise in the word of God that is the faint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the promises of the covenant of grace are his, and are made to him and fpoken to him *: though it be true that some of these promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his case than others, and God, by his Spirit,

^{*} Mr Shepard, in his Sound Believer, p. 159. of the late impression at Boston, says, " Embrace in thy bosom, not only some few promises, but all." And then he asks the question, " When may a Christian take a promise without presumption, as spoken to him?" He answers, " The rule

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may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater sense of the preciousness, and glory, and suitableness of the blessings contained in them.

But here some may be ready to fay, What, is there no fuch thing as any particular spiritual application of the promises of scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing as a spiritual and saving application of the invitations and promifes of scripture to the fouls of men: but it is also certain, that the nature of it is wholly mifunderstood by many persons, to the great ensnaring of their own souls, and the giving Satan a valt advantage against them, and against the interest of religion, and the church of God. The spiritual application of a scripture-promise does not confist in its being immediately suggested to the thoughts by some extrinfic agent, and being borne into the mind with this strong apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and directed to them at that time: there is nothing of the evidence of the hand of God in this effect, as events have proved, in many notorious instances; and it is a mean notion of a spiritual application of scripture; there is nothing in the nature of it at all beyond the power of the devil, if he be not restrained by God; for there is nothing in the nature of the effect that is spiritual, implying any vital communication of God. A truly spiritual application of the word of God is of a vallly higher nature; as much above the devil's power, as it is, fo to apply the word of God to a dead corpse, as to raise

is very fweet, but certain; when he takes all the scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament, when he sets all the commands before him, as a compass and guide to walk after, when he applies all the threatenings to drive him nearer unto Christ, the end of them. This no hypocrite can do; this the saints shall do; and by this they may know when the Lord speaks in particular unto them."

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it to life; or to a stone, to turn it into an angel. A spiritual application of the word of God consists in applying it to the heart, in spiritually enlightening, sanctifying influences. A spiritual application of an invitation or offer of the gospel consists in giving the soul a a spiritual sense or relish of the holy and divine blessings offered, and also the sweet and wonderful grace of the offerer, in making so gracious an offer, and of his holy excellency and faithfulness to fulfil what he offers, and his glorious sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the heart to embrace the offer; and thus giving the man evidence of his title to the thing offered. And fo a spiritual application of the promises of scripture, for the comfort of the faints, consists in enlightening their minds to fee the holy excellency and fweetness of the bleffings promifed, and also the holy excellency of the promifer, and his faithfulness and sufficiency; thus drawing forth their hearts to embrace the promifer, and thing promifed; and by this means, giving the fensible actings of grace, enabling them to see their grace, and fo their title to the promise. An application not confifting in this divine fenfe and enlightening of the mind, but confifting only in the word's being born into the thoughts, as if immediately then spoken, so making persons believe, on no other foundation, that the promise is theirs, is a blind application, and belongs to the spirit of darkness, and not of light.

When persons have their affections raised after this manner, those affections are really not raised by the word of God; the scripture is not the soundation of them; it is not any thing contained in those scriptures which come to their minds, that raise their affections; but truly that effect, viz. the strange manner of the word's being suggested to their minds, and a proposition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that scripture, nor any other; as that his sins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's good pleasure to give him in particular the kingdom, or the like. There are propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that

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persons of such and such qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: but there are no propositions to be found in the Bible declaring that such and such particular persons, independent on any previous knowledge of any qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God: and therefore, when any person is comforted, and affected by any such proposition it is by another word, a word newly coined, and not any word of God contained in the Bible *. And thus many persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, that no revelation of secret facts by immediate suggestion, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that sense wherein gracious effects and operations are

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By fecret facts, I mean things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that sense that they do not appear to the senses, nor are known by any argumentation, or any evidence to reason, nor any other way, but only by that revelation by immediate suggestion of the ideas of them to the mind. Thus for instance, if it should be revealed to me, that the next year this land would be invaded by a seet from France, or that such and such persons would then be converted, or that I myself should

"If God should tell a saint that he has grace, he might know it by believing the word of God: but it is not in this way that godly men do know that they have grace; it is not revealed in the word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular persons." Stoddard's Nature of sa-

ving Conversion, p. 84. 85.

^{* &}quot;Some Christians have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable: but after a man is in Christ, not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from a word. Forthough there is a word, which may give a man a dependence on Christ, without feeling any work, nay when he seels none, as absolute promises; yet no word giving assurance, but that which is made to some work, he that believeth, or is poor in spirit, &c. until that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise." Shepard's parable of the ten virgins. Part I. p. 86.

should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these events from any thing which now appears in providence, but immediately fuggesting and bearing in upon my mind, in an extraordinary manner, the apprehension or ideas of these facts, with a strong suggestion or impression on my mind, that I had no hand in myfelf, that these things would come to pass: or if it should be revealed to me, that this day there is a battle fought between the armies of fuch and fuch powers in Europe; or that fuch a prince in Europe was this day converted, or is now in a converted flate, having been converted formerly, or that one of my neighbours is converted, or that I myself am converted; not by having any other evidence of any of these facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary fuggestion or excitation of these ideas, and a strong impression of them upon my mind; this is a revelation of fecret facts by immediate fuggestion, as much as if the facts were future; for the facts being past, present, or future, alters not the case, as long as they are secret and hidden from my fenses and reason, and not spoken of in scripture, nor known by me any other way than by immediate fuggestion. If I have it revealed to me, that fuch a revolution is come to pass this day in the Ottoman empire, it is the very fame fort of revelation, as if it were revealed to me that fuch a revolution would come to pass there this day come twelvemonth; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other way than by immediate revelation. When Samuel told Saul that the affes which he went to feek were found, and that his father had left caring for the affes and forrowed for him; this was by the same kind of revelation, as that by which he told Saul, that in the plain of Tabor there should meet him three men going up to God to Bethel, (1 Sam. x. 2. 3.) though one of these things was future, and the other was not. So when Elisha told the king of Ifrael the words that the king of Syria spake in his bedchamber, it was by the same kind of revelation

lation with that by which he foretold many things to come.

It is evident that this revelation of fecret facts by immedate fuggestion, has nothing of the nature of a spiritual and divine operation, in the fense fore mentioned; there is nothing at all in the nature of the perceptions or ideas themselves, which are excited in the mind, that is divinely excellent, and fo, far above all the ideas of natural men; though the manner of exciting the ideas be extraordinary. In those things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only the manner of producing the effect, but the effect wrought is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unfanctified mind. Now simply the having an idea of facts, fetting aside the manner of producing those ideas, is nothing beyond what the minds of wicked men are susceptible of, without any goodness in them; and they all, either have or will have, the knowledge of the truth of the greatest and most important facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary manner of producing the ideas or perception of facts, even by immediate fuggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the minds of natural men, while they are yet natural men, are capable of, as is manifest in Balaam, and others spoken of in the scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate fuggestion of fecret facts that is spiritual, in the sense in which it has been proved that gracious operations are fo. If there be nothing in the ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a mind not fanctified, then God can put them into the mind by immediate power, without fanctifying it. As there is nothing in the idea of a rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine nature; fo that there is nothing binders but that an unfanctified mind may receive that idea: fo God, if he pleases, and when he pleases, immediately, and in an extraordinary manner, may excite that idea in an unfanctified mind. So also, as there is nothing in the idea or knowledge that fuch and fuch particular perfons are forgiven and accepted of God, and intitled to heaven, but what unfanctified minds may have and will have concerning many at the day of judgment; so God can, if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately, suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified mind now: there is no principle wanting in an unsanctified mind, to make it capable of such a suggestion or impression, nor is there any thing in them to exclude, or

necessarily to prevent such a suggestion.

And if these suggestions of secret sacts be attended with texts of scripture, immediately and extraordinarily brought to mind, about some other sacts that seem in some respects similar, that does not make the operation to be of a spiritual and divine nature. For that suggestion of words of scripture is no more divine, than the suggestion of the sacts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated: and two effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex

effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those affections which are properly founded on fuch immediate fuggestions, or fupposed suggestions, of secret facts, are not gracious affections. Not but that it is possible that such suggestions may be the occasion, or accidental cause of gracious affections; for fo may a missake and delusion; but it is never properly the foundation of gracious affections: for gracious affections, as has been shewn, are all the effects of an influence and operation which is spiritual, fupernatural, and divine. But there are many affections, and high affections, which some have, that have fuch kind of fuggestions or revelations for their very foundation: they look upon these as spiritual discoveries, which is a grofs delufion, and this delufion is truly the fpring whence their affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceeding manifest from what has been said, that what many persons call the witness of the Spirit, that they are the children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine;

and confequently that the affections built upon it, are vain and delufive. That which many call the witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate fuggestion and impression of that fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the children of God, and fo that their fins are pardoned, and that God has given them a title to heaven. This kind of knowledge, viz. knowing that a certain person is converted, and delivered from hell, and intitled to heaven, is no divine fort of knowledge in itself. This fort of fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine kind of fuggestion, in order to impress it on the mind, than any other fact which Balaam had impressed on his mind. It requires no higher fort of idea or fensation, for a man to have the apprehension of his own conversion impressed upon him, than to have the apprehension of his neighbour's conversion, in like manner, impressed: but God, if he pleased, might impress the knowledge of this fact, that he had forgiven his neighbour's fins, and given him a title to heaven, as well as any other fact, without any communication of his holinefs: the excellency and importance of the fact, does not at all hinder a natural man's mind being susceptible of an immediate suggestion and impression of it. Balaam had as excellent, and important, and glorious facts as this, immediately impressed on his mind, without any gracious influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious kingdom, and the bleffedness of the spiritual Israel in his peculiar favour, and their happiness living and dying. Yea, Abimelech king of the Philistines, had God's special favour to a particular person, even Abraham, revealed to him, Gen. xx. 6. 7. So it feems that he revealed to Laban his special favour to Jacob, fee Gen. xxxi. 24. and Pfal. cv. 15. And if a truly good man should have an immediate revelation or fuggestion from God, after the like manner, concerning his favour to his neighbour, or himself; it would be no higher kind of influence; it would be no more than a common fort of influence of God's Spirit; as the gift

gift of prophecy, and all revelation by immediate suggestion is; see I Cor. xiii. 2. And though it be true, that it is not possible that a natural man should have that individual suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the nature of the influence, or because that kind of influence which suggests such excellent sacts, is too high for him to be the subject of; but purely from the defect of a fact to be revealed. The influence which immediately suggests this sact, when it is true, is of no different kind from that which immediately suggests other true sacts: and so the kind and nature of the influence, is not above what is common to natural men, with good men.

But this is a mean ignoble notion of the witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear children, to suppose that there is nothing in the kind and nature of that influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious benefit, but what is common to natural men, or which men are capable of, and be in the mean time altogether unsanctified, and the children of hell; and that therefore the benefit or gift itself has nothing of the holy nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital communication of that Spirit. This notion greatly debases that high and most exalted kind of influence and operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true witness of the Spirit. That which is called the witness

The late venerable Stoddard in his younger time, falling in with the opinion of fome others, received this notion of the witness of the Spirit, by way of immediate suggestion; but, in the latter part of his life, when he had more thoroughly weighed things, and had more experience, he intirely rejected it; as appears by his treatise of the nature of saving conversion, p. 84. "The Spirit of God doth not testify to particular persons, that they are godly. Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify it to some; and they ground it on Rom. viii. 16. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' They think the Spirit reveals it by giving an inward testimony

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of the Spirit, Rom. viii. is elsewhere in the New Teftament called the feal of the Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. and iv. 13. alluding to the feal of princes, annexed to the instrument, by which they advanced any of their subjects to some high honour and dignity, or peculiar privilege in the kingdom, as a token of their special favour. Which is an evidence that the influence of the Spirit of the Prince of princes, in fealing his fayourites, is far from being of a common kind; and that there is no effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of divinity: as nothing is more royal than the royal feal; nothing more facred. that belongs to a prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very end and defign of it, to be the most peculiar stamp and confirmation of the royal authority, and great note of distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the king, or belongs to him, may be known from every thing elfe. And therefore undoubtedly the feal of the great King of heaven and earth instamped on the heart, is something high and holy in its own nature, some excellent communication from the infinite fountain of divine beauty and glory : and not merely a making known a fecret fact by revelation or fuggestion; which is a fort of influence of the Spirit of God, that the children of the devil have often been the fubjects of. The feal of the Spirit is a kind

mony to it; and some godly men think they have had experience of it: but they may easily mistake; when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up a spirit of faith, and sheds abroad the love of God in the heart, it is easy to mistake it for a testimony. And that is not the meaning of Paul's words. The Spirit reveals things to us, by opening our eyes to see what is revealed in the word; but the Spirit doth not reveal new truths, not revealed in the word. The Spirit discovers the grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth special actings of faith and love, which are evidential; but it doth not work in way of testimony. If God do but help us to receive the revelations in the word, we shall have comfort enough without new revelations."

of effect of the Spirit of God on the heart, which natural men, while such, are so far from a capacity of being the subjects of, that they can have no manner of notion or idea of it; agreeable to Rev. ii. 17. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. There is all reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same mark, evidence, or blessed token of special savour, which is elsewhere called

the feal of the Spirit.

What has milled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the word witness, its being called the witness of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any effect or work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence, from whence men may argue that they are the children of God; but an inward immediate fuggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the man, and testified to him, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of a fecret voice, or impression: not observing the manner in which the word witness, or testimony, is often used in the New Testament, where such terms often signify, not only a mere declaring and afferting a thing to be true, but holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued, and proved to be true. Thus, Heb. ii. 4. 4 God is faid to bear witness, with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now these miracles, here spoken of, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of affertions. but evidences and proofs. So Acts xiv. 3. 'Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, " which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted figns and wonders to be done by their hands. And John v. 36. But I have greater witness than ' that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.' Again, shap. x. 25. ' The works that I do in my Father's

name, they bear witness of me.' So the water and the blood are faid to bear witness, I John v. 8.not that they spoke or afferted any thing, but they were proofs and evidences. So God's works of providence, in the rain and fruitful seasons, are spoken of as witnesses of God's being and goodness, i e. they were evidences of these things. - And when the scripture speaks of the seal of the Spirit, it is an expression which properly denotes, not an immediate voice or fuggestion, but some work or effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine mark upon the foul, to be an evidence, by which God's children might be known. The feals of princes were the diftinguishing marks of princes: and thus God's feal is spoken of as God's mark, Rev. vii. 3. 'Hurt not the earth, neither the fea, nor the trees, till we have fealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;' together with Ezek. ix. 4. 'Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that figh, and that cry for all the abomi-" nations that are done in the midst thereof.' When God fets his feal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the feal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in scripture is called the feal of the Spirit, and the witness, or evidence of the Spirit. And this image instamped by the Spirit on God's children's hearts, is his own image: that is the evidence by which they are known to be God's children, that they have the image of their Father stamped upon their hearts by the Spirit of adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, viz. the image, and the name of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Cant. viii. 6. Set me as a feal upon thine heart, as a feal upon thine arm;' it is as much as to fay, Let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes were wont to bear their image; fo that what they fet their feal and royal mark upon, had their image left on

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it. It was the manner of princes of old to have their image engraven on their jewels and precious stones; and the image of Augustus engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman emperors, in Christ's and the apostles times *. And the saints are the jewels of Tefus Christ, the great potentate, who has the possession of the empire of the universe: and these jewels have his image instamped upon them, by his royal fignet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the scripture means by the seal of the Spirit; especially when it is stamped in fo fair and clear a manner, as to be plain to the eye of conscience; which is what the feripture calls our fpirit. This is truly an effect that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. This is in itself of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this framp upon the heart, is fuch that no natural man can be the fubject of any thing of the like nature with it. This is the highest fort of witness of the Spirit, which it is possible the foul should be the fubject of: if there were any fuch thing as a witness of the Spirit by immediate suggestion or revelation, this would be vaftly more noble and excellent, and as much' above it as the heaven is above the earth. This the devil cannot imitate: as to an inward fuggestion of the Spirit of God, by a kind of secret voice speaking, and immediately afferting and revealing a fact, he can do that which is a thousand times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine effect, or work of the Spirit of God, which has been now spoken of †.

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^{*} See Chambers's dictionary, under the word EN-GRAVING.

[†] Mr Shepard is abundant in militating against the notion of men's knowing their good estate by an immediate witness of the Spirit, without judging by any effect or work of the Spirit, wrought on the heart, as an evidence and proof that persons are the children of God. Parab. P. I. p. 134. "Knowing your election of God. How so? Immediately? Some divines think angels see it not so, and that it

Another thing which is a full proof that the feal of the Spirit is no revelation of any fact by immediate fuggestion,

is peculiar to God fo to do; but mediately; for our word came in power, and in much affurance, to make you enlarged for God, to turn you from idols unto God, &c-." Again in the same page, "It is heaven to cleave to him in every command; it is death to depart from any command. Hereby know we that we are in him. If it were possible to ask of the angels, How they know they are not devils? they would answer, The Lord's will is ours. So here, how do you know you have not the nature of devils, and fo in a flate of devils, bound there until the judgment of the great day? Because God hath changed our vile natures, and made our wills like unto his glorious will." And p. 135. "The major is the word, the minor experience, and the conclusion the Lord's Spirit's work, quickening your spirits toit. Now, fay some, how do you know this? Thus you may be mistaken; for many have been deceived thus. Grant that; and shall a child not take bread when it is given him, though dogs fnatch at it?" And p. 137. If you look to a spirit without a work, whilst you do feek confolation, you cannot avoid the condemnation of the word. You say the Spirit has spoken peace to you; but do you love Christ? I look not to that, but to the Spirit. Why, the word faith, 'He that loves him not, let him be Anathema.' So is the league between your fins and your fouls broken? Ans. I look not to that. Why, John faith, ' he that committeth fin is of the devil.' Are you new creatures? I look not to that. Why, the word faith, unless you be bornagain you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Page 176. 177. " A man faith, I have Christ; and so have not they. I ask, where is the Spirit? You have the deed; where is the feal; You have the testator; where is the executor? the Spirit in you? Yes, I have it; it has witneffed Chrift is mine. Anf. It has witneffed; but what has it wrought? where is the power of his death, killing thy lufts? where is the life of the Spirit of Jesus in you? where is the oil in your vessel? Truly I look for the Bridegroom; but I regard not that; neither are others to regard it in way of evidence. Then I fay, the chief evidence is destroyed in the churches. I have known many that have had affurances; yet never faw them prove right, until it witnessed this was here. What should be the causes of this, and that men should make blusters in the churches because of this, as though it was building on

gestion, but is grace itself in the soul, is, that the seal of the Spirit is called the earnest of the Spirit, in the scripture.

works? In several men they are several. 1. An aptness to out run the truth, and to fall from one extreme to another. -2. The apostacy of eminent professors, who have been deceived in their evidencing thus .- 3. Corrupt experience .--- 4. A heart that never felt the bitterness and bondage of fin, as the greatest evil." Page 215. 216. "The peace, and joy, and affurance of that glory, which eye never faw, in the faints, it is from the witness of the Spirit of glory; not only because that God is their God, but because they are his people. It is I fa; from the witness of God in his word; not from themselves, nor from man only, that they approve me; nor from dreams and diabolical breathings; but from the Spirit of God; he brings tidings of it; and from fuch a spirit (that you may know it) that not only shews you God is your God, and so you rejoice because of this; for thus it is with many a carnal heart, and he hath peace, being in horror, from this, the Lord loves me; but he makes you to rejoice, because you are the Lord's people, because he hath changed your heart; now the peace is found, and joy is right: and here I would try the peace of any man." Part II. p. 168. 169. " All the heirs of the promifes, as heirs that have legacies left them, they go to the will of the deceased father; and that comforts, that they hold to, that is fure; fuch an one shall have it, if his name be there. But if one shall fay, such a one hath promised me fuch lands: Is it in his will? No; but fince he died, as I was taking a pipe, he came to me: Oh be not deceived!"

Again, in his Sound Believer, there is a long discourse of fanctification as the chief evidence of justification, from p. 221, for many pages sollowing; I shall transcribe but a very small part of it. "Tell me, how you will know that you are justified. You will say, by the testimony of the Spirit. And cannot the same Spirit shine upon your graces, and witness that you are sanctified, as well? I John iv. 13. 24. I Cor. ii. 12. Can the Spirit make the one clear to you, and not the other? Oh beloved, it is a sad thing to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification possibly may be an evidence. May be! Is it not certain? Affordedly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own promises of savour are not true evidences thereof, and con-

fequently that they are lies and untruths."

Mr Flavel also much opposes this notion of the witness of

ture. It is very plain, that the feal of the Spirit is the fame thing with the earnest of the Spirit, by 2 Cor. i. 22. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of

the Spirit by immediate revelation. Sacramental Meditations, med. 4. speaking of the fealing of the Spirit, he says, "In fealing the believer, he doth not make use of an audible voice, nor the ministry of angels, nor immediate and extraordinary revelations; but he makes use of his own graces, implanted in our hearts, and his own promifes, written in the scripture: and in this method, he usually brings the doubting trembling heart of a believer to rest and comfort." Again, ibid. " Affurance is produced in our fouls by the reflective acts of faith; the Spirit helps us to reflect upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our bearts; hereby we know that we know him, I John ii. 3. To know that we know, is a reflex act. Now it is impoffible there should be a reflex, before there bath been a direct act. No man can have the evidence of his faith, before the habit is infused, and the vital act performed. The object matter, to which the Spirit feals, is his own fanctifying operation." Afterwards, ibid. he fays, " immediate ways of the Spirit's fealing are ceased. No man may now expect, by any new revelation, or fign from heaven, by any voice, or extraordinary infpiration, to have his falvation fealed: hut must expect that mercy in God's ordinary way and method, searching the scriptures, examining our own hearts, and waiting on the Lord in prayer. The learned Gerson gives an inflance of one that had been long upon the borders of despair, and at last sweetly assured and settled: he anfwered, Non ex nova aliqua revelatione; not by any new revelation, but by fubjecting my understanding to, and comparing my heart with the written word. And Mr Roberts, in his treatife of the covenants, speaks of another, that so vehemently panted after the sealings and assurance of the love of God to his foul, that for a long time he earneftly defired some voice from heaven; and fometimes, walking in the folitary fields, earneftly defired fome miraculous voice from the trees or stones there. This was denied him; but in time, a better was afforded, in a scriptural way. Again, ihid. "This method of sealing, is beyond all other methods in the world. For in miraculous voices and infpirations, it is possible there may fubeffe falfum, be found some cheat, or impostures of the devil; but the Spirit's witness in the heart, fuitable to the revelation in the scripture, cannot deceive us."

' the Spirit in our hearts.' And Eph. i. 13. 14. 'In whom, after that ye believed, ye were fealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our ' inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased pol-· fession, unto the praise of his glory.' Now the earnest is part of the money agreed for, given in hand, as a token of the whole, to be paid in due time; a part of the promifed inheritance, granted now, in token of full possession of the whole hereafter. But surely that kind of communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the highest and most excellent kind of communication, fomething that is in its own nature spiritual, holy and divine, and far from any thing that is common; and therefore high above any thing of the nature of inspiration, or revelation of hidden facts by fuggestion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earnest and beginning of glory, but grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear exercises of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excellent divine thing, 'charity that never faileth,' which is a prelibation and beginning of the light, sweetness, and bleffedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. It is grace that is the feed of glory, and dawning of glory in the heart, and therefore it is grace that is the earnest of the future inheritance. What is it that is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the foul, but spiritual life? and what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart exerting and communicating himself there in his own proper, holy, or divine nature; and this is the sum-total of the inheritance that Christ purchased for the elect. For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour, or purchaser, and the purchase is made of him; and the Son is the purchaser and the price; and the Holy Spiait is the great bleffing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated, Gal. iii. 13. 14. and hence the Spirit is often Spoken

spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the gospel, Luke xxiv, 49. Acts i. 4. and chap. ii. 38. 39. Gal. iii. 14. Eph, i. 13. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament, John chap. xiv. xv. xvi. This is the fum of the bleffings of eternal life, which shall be given in heaven. (Compare John vii, 37. 38. 39. and John iv. 14. with Rev. xxi. 6, and xxii. 1. 17.) It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit that the faints have all their light, life, holinefs, beauty, and joy in heaven: and it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the fame Spirit, that the faints have all light, life, holiness, beauty, and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the faints, in this lefs measure and small beginning, is, the earnest of the Spirit, the earnest of the future inheritance, and the first fruits of the Spirit,' as the apostle calls it, Rom, viii. 22. where, by the first-fruits of the Spirit, the apostle undoubtedly means the same tital gracious principle that he speaks of in all the preseding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and fets in apposition to flesh or corruption. Therefore this earnest of the Spirit, and first fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the seal of the Spirit, is the vital gracious fanctifying communication and influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts by the Spirit*.

And indeed the apostle, when in that, Rom. viii, 16.

After a man is in Christ, net to judge by the work, is not to judge by the Spirit. For the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal. Now earnest is part of the money bargained for; the beginning of heaven, of the light and life of it. He that sees not that the Lordis his by that, sees no God his at all. On, therefore, do not look for, a spirit, without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal, without seeing and feeling of some work sirst. I thank the Lord, I do but pity those that think otherwise. If a sheep of Christ, oh, wonder not." Shepard's Par. P. L. p. 26.

be speaks of the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, does fufficiently explain himself, if his words were but attended to. What is here expressed is connected with the two preceding verses, as resulting from what the apostle had said there, as every reader may fee. The three verses together are thus, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the fons of God: for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' Here, what the apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shews, that what he has respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit's giving us witness or evidence that we are God's children, is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a spirit of adoption, or spirit of a child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the witness on evidence the apostle speaks of, that we are children, that we have the spirit of children, or spirit of adoption. And what is that, but the spirit of love? There are two kinds of spirits the apostle speaks of, the spirit of a slave, or the spirit of bondage, that is fear; and the spirit of a child, or spirit of adoption, and that is love. postle says, we have not received the spirit of bondage, or of flaves, which is a spirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble spirit of children, a spirit of love, which naturally disposes us to go to God as children to a father, and behave towards God as children. And this is the evidence or witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are children. This is the plain fense of the apostle : and so undoubtedly the apostle here is speaking of the very same way of casting out doubting and fear, and the spirit of bondage, which the apostle John speaks of, 1 John iv. 18. viz. by the prevailing of love, that is the spirit of a child. The fpirit of bondage works by fear, the flave fears the rod; but love cries Abba, Father; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as children; and it, gives

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gives us clear evidence of our union to God as his children, and so casts out fear. So that it appears that the witness of the Spirit the apostle speaks of, is far from being any whisper, or immediate suggestion or revelation; but that gracious holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints, the disposition and temper of children, appearing in sweet child-like love to God, which casts out fear, or a spirit of a slave.

And the same thing is evident from all the context: it is plain the apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the hearts of the saints, as a gracious principle, set in opposition to the sless or ruption: and so he does in the words that immediately introduce this passage we are upon, ver. 12. 'For if ye live after the sless, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the sless, ye shall

· live.'

Indeed it is past doubt with me, that the apostle has a more special respect to the spirit of grace, or the spirit of love, or spirit of a child, in its more lively actings; for it is perfect love or ftrong love only, which fo witnesses or evidences that we are children, as to cast out fear, and wholly deliver from the spirit of bondage. The ftrong and lively exercises of a spirit of child-like, evangelical, humble love to God, give clear evidence of the foul's relation to God as his child; which does very greatly and directly fatisfy the foul. And though it be far from being true, that the foul in this case, indges only by an immediate witness, without any sign or evidence; for it judges and is affured by the greatest fign and clearest evidence; yet in this case, the faint stands in no need of multiplied figns, or any long reafoning upon them. And though the fight of his relative union with God, and his being in his favour, is not without a medium, because he sees it by that medium, viz. his love; yet his fight of the union of his heart to God is immediate: love, the bond of union, is feen intuitively: the faint fees and feels plainly the union between his foul and God; it is fo strong and lively,

that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is affored that he is a child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a child-like relation to God, when he plainly sees a child-like upion between God and his soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were naturally and necessarily cry,

Abba, Father?

And whereas the apostle fays, the Spirit hears witnels with our spirits; by our spirit here, is meant our conscience, which is called the spirit of man; Prov. xx. 27. 'The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, fearching all the inward parts of the belly.' We elfewhere read of the witness of this spirit of ours; 2 Cori. 12. ' For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our ' conscience.' And I John iii. 19. 20. 21. 'And hereby do we know that we are of the truth, and shall affure our hearts before him. For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth ' all things. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' When the apostle Paul speaks of the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirit, he is not to be understood of two spirits, that are two seperate, collateral, independant witnesses; but it is by one that we receive the witness of the other: the Spirit of God gives the evidence, by infusing and shedding abroad the love of God, the spirit of a child, in the heart; and our spirit, or our conscience, receives and declares this evidence for our ten joicing.

Many have been the mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive notion of the witness of the Spirit, that it is a kind of inward voice, suggestion, or declaration from God to man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a text of scripture; and many have been the false, and vain, (though very high) affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be seared that multitudes of souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this

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But I proceed now to a second characteristic of gracious affections.

II. The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable nature of divine things, as they are in themselves; and not any concei-

ved relation they bear to felf, or felf-interest.

I say, that the supremely excellent nature of divine things, is the sirst, or primary and original objective soundation of the spiritual affections of true saints; for I do not suppose that all relation which divine things bear to themselves, and their own particular interest, are wholly excluded from all instuence in their gracious affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential instuence in those affections that are truly holy and spiritual, as I shall shew how by and by.

It was before observed, that the affection of love is as it were the fountain of all affection; and particularly, that Christian love is the fountain of all gracious affections: now the divine excellency and glory of God, and Jesus Christ, the word of God, the works of God, and the ways of God, &c. is the primary reason, why a true faint loves these things; and not any supposed interest that he has in them, or any conceived benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imagined relation which they bear to his interest, that self-love can properly be said to be the

first foundation of his love to these things.

Some say that all love arises from self love; and that it is impossible in the nature of things, for any man to have any love to God, or any other being, but that love to himself must be the foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for want of consideration that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so defires his glory, or the enjoyment of him, he desires these things as his own happiness; the glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his perfections, are considered as things agreeable to him, tending to make him happy;

he places his happiness in them, and desires them as things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with delight and joy, and fo make him happy. And fo, they fay, it is from felflove, or a defire of his own happiness, that he defires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious perfections. But then they ought to confider a little further, and inquire how the man came to place his happiness in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's perfections. There is no doubt, but that after God's glory, and the beholding his perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest happiness in these things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own happiness. But how came these things to be so agreeable to him, that he efteems it his highest happiness to glorify God, &c.? is not this the fruit of love? a man must first love God. or have his heart united to him, before he will efteem God's good his own, and before he will defire the glorifying and enjoying of God as his happiness. It is not strong arguing, that because after a man has his heart united to God in love, as a fruit of this, he desires his glory and enjoyment as his own happiness, that therefore a defire of this happiness of his own must needs be the cause and foundation of his love: unless it be strong arguing, that because a father begat a son, that therefore his fon certainly begat him. If after a man loves God, and has his heart fo united to him, as to look upon God as his chief good, and on God's good as his own, it will be a consequence and fruit of this, that even felf-love, or love to his own happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very exercise of selflove, went before his love to God, and that his love to God was a consequence and fruit of that. Something else, entirely distinct from self-love, might be the cause of this, viz. a change made in the views of his mind, and relish of his heart; whereby he apprehends a beauty, glory, and supreme good, in God's nature, as it is in

itself. This may be the thing that first draws his heart to him, and causes his heart to be united to him, prior to all considerations of his own interest or happiness, although after this, and as a fruit of this, he necessarily

feeks his interest and happiness in God.

There is such a thing as a kind of love or affection that a man may have towards perfors or things, which does properly arise from self-love; a preconceived relation to himself, or some respect already manifested by another to him, or some benefit already received or depended on, is truly the first foundation of his love, and what his affection does wholly arife from; and is what precedes any relish of, or delight in the nature and qualities inherent in the being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first thing that draws a man's benevolence to another, is the beholding those qualifications and properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves, and the subject of them, on this account, worthy of effeem and good-will, love arises in a very different manner, than when it first arises from some gift bestowed by another, or depended on from him, as a judge loves and favours a man that has bribed him; or from the relation he supposes another has to him, as a man who loves another, because he looks upon him as his child. When love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from felf-love.

That kind of affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual love, as appears from what has been said already: for self-love is a principle entirely natural, and as much in the hearts of devils as angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere result of it can be supernatural and divine, in the manner before described*. Christ plainly speaks of this kind of love,

For There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual, for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted." Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins, P. I. p. 25.

as what is nothing beyond the love of wicked men, Luke vi. 12. 'If ye love them that love you, what thank have ve? for finners also love those that love them.' And the devil himself knew that that kind of respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthless in the light of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a slander before God, against Job, as in Job i. 9. 10 'Doth Job serve God for nought?hast northou made an hedge about him, and about his house?" &c .- Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the objection to have been good, in case the accusation had been true, by allowing that that matter should be tried, and that Job should be so dealt with, that it might appear in the event, whether Job's respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the proof of the fincerity and goodness of his respect upon that issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the I first foundation of a true love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the fupreme loveliness of his nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a man, or any creature levely, is his excellency; and fo what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief ground of true love, is his excellency. God's nature, or the divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite beauty, brightness, and glory itself. But how can that be true love of this excellent and lovely nature, which is not built on the foundation of its true loveliness? how can that be true love of beauty and bright ness, which is not for beauty and brightness sake? how can that be a true prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the fake of its worthiness and preciousness? this infinite excellency of the divine nature, as it is in itself, is the true ground of all that is good in God in any respect; but how can a man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that excellency in him, which is the foundation of all that is in any manner of respect good or desirable in

him? they whose affection to God is founded first on his profitableness to them, their affection begins at the wrong end; they regard God only for the utmost limit of the stream of divine good, where it touches them, and reaches their interest; and have no respect to that infinite glory of God's nature, which is the original good, and the true fountain of all good, the first foundation?

of all true love.

A natural principle of felf-love may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without feeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections of the foul of man, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from self-love, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited against another, or in opposition to another, for fomething in him that croffes felf-love: gratitude is an affection one has towards another, for loying him, or gratifying him, or for fomething in him that fuits felf-love. And there may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love; as there may be anger without any proper hatred, as in parents towards their children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the fame time have a strong habitual love to them. gratitude is the principle which is an exercise in wicked men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the 6th of Luke, where he fays, finners love those that love them; and which he declares concerning even the publicans, who were some of the most carnal and profligate fort of men, Matth. v. 46. is the very principle that is wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and it is a principle that even the brute beafts do exercife; a dog will love his mafter that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them,

whom at the same time they have an habitual enmity against. Thus Saul was onceand again greatly affected, and even diffolved with gratitude towards David, for sparing his life, and yet remained an habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; fo they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the same self-love may work after the same manner towards God as towards men. And we have manifelt inflances of it in feripture; as indeed the children of Ifrael, who fang God's praifes at the Red Sea, but foon forgat God's works: and in Naaman the Syrian, who was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprofy, fo as to have his heart engaged thenceforward to worship the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was Nebuchadnezzar greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beafts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shews a dreadful prevalence of wickedness, when it even overbears, and suppresses the better principles of human nature: as it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were without natural affection, Rom. ii. 31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, are evidences of an high degree of vice, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection has the nature of virtue,

or faving grace.

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Self-love, through the exercise of a mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways. A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have been educated in, or have some way imbibed; as though he were only goodness and mercy, and not revenging justice; or as though the exercises of his goodness were necessary, and not free and sovereign; or as though his goodness were dependent on what is in them, and as it were constrained by

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them. Men on such grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in heaven.

Again, felf love may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great infensibility of their state with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to anger; they have no fense of the hemousness of fin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible opposition of the holy nature of God against it: and so having formed in their minds such a God as fuits them, and thinking God to be such an one as themselves, who favours and agrees with them, they may like him very, well, and feel a fort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men's affections may be much moved towards God, from felf love, by some remarkable outward benefits received from God; as it was with Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, and the children of Ifrael at the Red Sea.

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does arise in men, from an opinion of the favour and love of God to them, as the first foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and diffress through fears of hell, they may fuddenly get a notion, through some impression on their imagination, or immediate suggestion with or without texts of scripture, or by some other means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their fine, and made them his children; and this is the first thing that causes their affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ: and then after this, and upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may feem excellent. And if such persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? they would perhaps readily answer, Yes; when indeed, if the matter be Arietly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God:

and they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwife than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wifdom in preferring, dignifying, and exalting them, and will do for them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the universe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart swallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond most of their neighbours, and loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in heaven. When this is the case with carnal men, their very lusts will make him feem lovely: pride itself will prejudice them in favour of that which they call Christ: selfish proud man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his interest, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this fort of persons begin, so they go on. Their affections are raised from time to time, primarily on this soundation of self-love and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a salse notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulses, and whispers, and external representations, immediately made to their imagination. These things they often have; which they take to be manifestations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others of mankind; and so their affections

are often renewedly fet a-going.

Whereas the exercises of true and holy love in the faints arise in another way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely, but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are wont from time to time to begin here, and to arise primarily from these

views; and then, consequentially, they see God's love. and great favour to them +. The faint's affections begin with God; and felf-love has a hand in these affections confequentially, and fecondarily only. On the contrary, those false affections begin with felf, and an acknowledgment of an excellency in God, and an affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the love of the true faint God is the lowest foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards. wherein felf-love is concerned as an handmaid : on the contrary, the hypocrite lays himself at the bottom of all, as the first foundation, and lays on God as the superstructure; and even his acknowledgment of God's glory itself depends on his regard to his private interest.

Self-love may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them, as parts of a community: as a natural principle of felf-love, without any other principle, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the nation to which he belongs: as for instance, in the present war, self-love may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and forry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. So the fame natural principle may extend further, and even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of other planets, if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits that mankind have received beyond the fallen angels. And hence men, from this principle, may be much affected with the wonderful goodness of God to

mankind.

^{+ &}quot; There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, &c. But I speak of that first fight of him that precedes the second act of faith; and it is an intuitive, or real fight of him, as he is in his glory." Shepard's Par. of the Ten Virgins, Part I. p. 74.

mankind, his great goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen man, and the marvellous love of Christ in suffering such great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in heaven for us; looking on themselves as persons concerned and interested, as being some of this species of creatures so highly favoured: the same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things that I have said do by no means imply that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection: they imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is merely natural, and that when persons have affections towards God only or primarily for benefits received, their affection is only the exercise of a natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that gratitude which natural men ex-

perience. It differs in the following respects:

1. True gratitude or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation laid before, of love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, viz. God's own excellency; and hence the affections are disposed to flow out on occasions of God's kindness. The faint having seen the glory of God, and his heart overcome by it, and captivated into a supreme love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindnesses received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in Saul towards David: but this is not the same kind of thing, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, that his heart was before possessed with a high esteem of, and love to; whole heart by this means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with gratitude, and affected in anothes . ther manner. Self-love is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the faints love God for his kindness to them, Psal. exvi. 1. 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication.' But something else is included; and another love prepares the way, and lays

the foundation for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious gratitude, men are affected with the attribute of God's goodness and free grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their interest, but as a part of the glory and beauty of God's nature. That wonderful and unparalleled grace of God, which is manifelted in the work of redemption, and shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears to to the angels; it is a great part of the moral perfection and beauty of God's nature. This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the faint who exercises a gracious thankfulness for it, fees it to be so, and delights in it as such; though his concern in it ferves the more to engage his mind, and raise the attention and affection; and felf-love here affifts as an handmaid, being fublervient to higher principles, to lead forth the mind to the view and contemplation, and engage and fix the attention, and heighten the joy and love. God's kindness to them is a glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the beauty of the attribute of God's goodness: the exercises and displays of this attribute, by this means, are brought near to them, and fet right before them. So that in a holy thankfulness to God, the concern our interest has in God's goodness, is not the first foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the heart before, in that stock of love which was to God, for his excellency in himself, that makes the heart tender, and susceptive of such impressions from his goodness to us. Nor is our own interest, or the benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective ground of the present exercises of the affection, but God's goodness, as part of the beauty of his nature; although the manifestations of that lovely attribute, fet immediately

immediately before our eyes, in the exercises of it for us, be the special occasion of the mind's attention to that beauty, at that time, and serves to fix the attention, and heighten the affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that text, I John iv. 19. 'We love him, because he first loved us,' as though this implied that God's love to the true saints were the first

foundation of their love to him.

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In answer to this I would observe, that the apostle's drift in these words, is to magnify the love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no love to him; as will be manifest to any one who compares this verfe and the two following with the 9th, roth, and 11th verses. And that God loved us, when we had no love to him, the apostle proves by this argument, that God's love to the elect is the ground of their leve to him. And that it is three ways. 1. The faints love to God is the fruit of God's love to them, as it is the gift of that love. God gave them a spirit of love to him, because he loved them from eternity. And in this respect God's love to his elect is the first foundation of their love to him, as it is the foundation of their regeperation, and the whole of their redemption. 2. The exercises and discoveries that God has made of his wonderful love to finful men, by Jesus Christ, in the work of redemption, is one of the chief manifestations, which God has made of the glory of his moral perfection, to both angels and men; and so is one main objective ground of the love of both to God; in a good confistence with what was faid before. 3. God's love to a particular elect person, discovered by his conversion, is a great manifestation of God's moral perfection and glory to him, and a proper occasion of the excitation of the love of holy gratitude, agreeable to what was before And that the faints do in these respects love God, because he first loved them, fully answers the delign of the apostle's argument in that place. So that no good argument can be drawn from hence, against a spiritual

fpiritual and gracious love in the faints, arifing primarily from the excellency of divine things, as they are in themselves, and not from any conceived relation they

bear to their interest.

And as it is with the love of the faints, fo it is with their joy, and spiritual delight and pleasure: the first foundation of it is not any confideration or conception of their interest in divine things; but it primarily confifts in the fweet entertainment their minds have in the view or contemplation of the divine and holy beauty of these things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main difference between the joy of the hypocrite, and the joy of the true faint. The former rejoices in himself; self is the first foundation of his joy: the latter rejoices in God. The hypocrite has his mind pleafed and delighted, in the first place, with his own privilege, and the happiness which he supposes he has attained to, or shall attain to. True faints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the fweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the fpring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures: it is the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment, they have in the view of the beautiful and delightful nature of divine things, is the foundation of the joy that they have afterwards, in the confideration of their being theirs. But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: they first rejoice and are elevated with it, that they are made fo much of by God; and then on that ground he feems, in a fort, lovely to them.

The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfection; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, is his own beauty; he appears in himself the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The way of salvation by Christ is a delightful way to him, for the sweet and admirable manifestations of the divine perfections in it: the holy doctrines of the gospel, by which God is exalted and

man abased, holiness honoured and promoted, and sin greatly difgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign love manifested, are glorious doctrines in his eyes, and fweet to his tafte, prior to any conception of his interest in these things. Indeed the saints rejoice in their interest in God, and that Christ is theirs; and fo they have great reason : but this is not the first spring of their joy. They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs. They first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, and the excellency of his grace, and the beauty of the way of falvation by him, and then they have a fecondary joy, in that so excellent a Saviour, and fuch excellent grace is theirs *. But that which is the true faint's superstructure is the hypocrite's foundation. When they hear of the wonderful things of the gospel,

* Dr Owen on the Spirit, p. 190. speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, "The effects of this work on the mind, which is the first subject affected with it, proceeds not fo far as to give it delight, complacency, and fatisfaction, in the lovely spiritual nature and excellencies of the things revealed unto it. The true nature of faving illumination confifts in this, that it gives the mind fuch a direct intuitive infight and prospect into spiritual things, as that in their own spiritual nature they suit, please, and satisfy it; fo that it is transformed into them, cast into the mould of them, and refts in them; Rom. vi. 17. chap. xii. 2. 1 Cor. ii. 13. 14. 2 Cor. iii. 18. chap. iv. 6. This, the work we have infifted on, reacheth not unto. For notwithstanding any discovery that is made therein of spiritual things unto the mind, it finds not an immediate, direct, spiritual excellency in them; but only with respect unto some benefit or advantage, which is to be attained by means thereof. It will not give fuch a spiritual insight into the mystery of God's grace by Jefus Chrift, called his glory shining in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as that the foul, in its first direct view of it, should, for what it is in itself, admire it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual solace, with refreshment, in it. But fuch a light, fuch a knowledge, it communicates, as that a man may like it well in its eff. cts, as a way of mercy and falvation."

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of God's great love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying love to sinners, and the great things Christ has purchased and promised to the saints, and hear these things lively and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of pleasure, and be listed up with what they hear; but if their joy be examined, it will be found to have no other foundation than this, that they look upon these things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great love of Christ so vastly distinguishing some from others; for self-love, and even pride itself, makes them effect great distinction from others. No wonder, in this consident opinion of their own good estate, that they feel well under such doctrine, and are pleased in the highest degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their joy is really a joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the joy of hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass, that in their rejoicings and elevations, they are wont to keep their eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual discoveries or experiences, their minds are taken up about them, admiring their own experiences: and what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the glory of God, or beauty of Christ, but the beauty of their experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, What a good experience is this! what a great discovery is this! what wonderful things have I met with! and fo they put their experiences in the place of Christ, and his beauty and fulness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable experiences; instead of feeding and feasting their souls in the view of what is without them, viz. the innate, fweet, refreshing amiableness of the things exhibited in the gospel, their eyes are off from these things, or at least they view them only as it were sideways; but the object that fixes their contemplation, is their experience; and they are feeding their fouls, and featting a felfish principle with a view of their discoveries: they take more comfort in their discoveries than in Christ discovered, which is the true notion of living

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upon experiences and frames, and not a uling experiences as the ligns, on which they rely for evidence of their good estate, which some call living on experiences; though it be very observable, that some of them who do so, are most notorious for living upon experiences, ac-

cording to the true notion of it.

The affections of hypocrites are very often after this manner; they are first much affected with some impression on their imagination, or some impulse, which they take to be an immediate fuggestion, or testimony from God, of his love and their happiness, and high privilege in some respect, either with or without a text of scripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great discovery; and hence arise high affections. And when their affections are raised, then they view those high affections, and call them great and wonderful experiences; and they have a notion that God is greatly pleased with those affections; and this affects them more; and fo they are affected with their affections. And thus their affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfeetly swallowed up: and self-conceit, and a fierce zeal rifes withal; and all is built like a caftle in the air, on no other foundation but imagination, felf-love, and pride.

And as the thoughts of this fort of persons are, so is their talk; for out of the abundance of their heart their mouth speaketh. As in their high affections they keep their eye upon the beauty of their experiences, and greatness of their attainments; so they are great talkers about themselves. The true saint, when under great spiritual affections, from the sulness of his heart, is ready to be speaking much of God, and his glorious perfections and works, and of the beauty and amiableness of Christ, and the glorious things of the gospel; but hypocrites, in their high affections, talk more of the discovery, than they do of the thing discovered; they are sull of talk about the great things they have met with, the wonderful discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the love of God to them, how safe their condi-

tion is, and how they know they shall go to heaven,

A true faint, when in the enjoyment of true discoveries of the sweet glory of God and Christ, has his mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that time to view himself, and his own attainments: it would be a diverfion and loss which he could not bear, to take his eye off from the savishing object of his contemplation, to furvey his own experience, and to fpend time in thinking with himself, what an high attainment this is, and what a good story I now have to tell others. Nor does the pleasure and sweetness of his mind at that time chiefly arise from the consideration of the safety of his state, or any thing he has in view of his own qualifications, experiences, or circumstances; but from the divine and supreme beauty of what is the object of his direct view, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his mind.

As the love and joy of hypocrites are all from the fource of felf-love; so it is with their other affections, their forrow for fin, their humiliation and submission, their religious desires and zeal : everything is as it were paid for before-hand, in God's highly gratifying their felf-love, and their lufts, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as things are in their imagination. It is easy for nature, as corrupt as it is, under a notion of being already some of the highest favourites of heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favour them in their fins, to love this imaginary God that fuits them fo well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high affections of many are all built on the supposition of their being eminent saints. If that opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower form of faints, (though they should yet suppose themselves to be real faints) their high affections would fall to the ground. If they only faw a little of the finfulness and vileness

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wileness of their own hearts, and their deformity, in the midst of their best duties and their best affections, it would knock their affections on the head; because their affections are built upon self, therefore self knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious affections, they are built elsewhere; they have their soundation out of self in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a discovery of themselves, of their own deformity, and the meanness of their experiences, though it will purify their affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some respects sweeten and heighten them.

III. Those affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellency of divine things. Or, (to express it otherwise), a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency, is the first beginning and spring of all holy affections.

Here, for the fake of the more illiterate reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral excellency of divine things.

And it may be observed, that the word moral is not to be understood here, according to the common and vulgar acceptation of the word, when men speak of morality, and a moral behaviour; meaning an outward conformity to the duties of the moral law, and especially the duties of the second table; or intending no more at farthest, than such seeming virtues, as proceed from natural principles, in opposition to those virtues that are more inward, spiritual, and divine; as the honesty, justice, generosity, good nature, and public spirit of many of the heathen, are called moral virtues, in distinction from the holy saith, love, humility, and heavenly-mindedness of true Christians: I say, the word moral is not to be understood thus in this place.

But in order to a right understanding what is meant, it must be observed, that divines commonly make a distinction between moral good and evil, and natural good and evil. By moral evil, they mean the evil of sin, or that evil which is against duty, and contrary to what is

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right and ought to be. By natural evil, they do not mean that evil which is properly opposed to duty; but that which is contrary to mere nature, without any respect to a rule of duty. So the evil of suffering is called natural evil, fuch as pain and torment, difgrace, and the like: these things are contrary to mere nature, contrary to the nature of both bad and good, hateful to wicked men and devils, as well as good men and angels. So likewise natural defects are called natural evils, as if a child be monstrous, or a natural fool; these are natural evils, but are not moral evils, because they have not properly the nature of the evil of fin On the other hand, as by moralevil, divines mean the evil of fin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by moral good, they mean that which is contrary to fin, or that good in beings who have will and choice, whereby, as voluntary agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or fo as is most fit, and fuitable, and lovely. By natural good, they mean that good that is entirely of a different kind from holiness or virtue, viz. that which perfects or fuits nature, considering nature abstractly from any holy or unholy qualifications, and without any relation to any rule or measure of right and wrong.

Thus pleasure is a natural good; fo is honour, fo is frength; fo is speculative knowledge, human learning, and policy. Thus there is a distinction to be made between the natural good that men are possessed of, and their moral good; and also between the natural and moral good of the angels in heaven: the great capacity of their understandings, and their great strength, and the honourable circumstances they are in as the great ministers of God's kingdom, whence they are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, is the natural good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious holiness and goodness, their pure and flaming love to God, and to the faints, and one another, is their moral good. So divines make a distinction between the natural and moral perfections of God: by the moral perfections of God, they mean those attributes which God

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God exercises as a moral agent, or whereby the heart and will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and goodness; or, in one word, his holiness. By God's natural attributes or perfections, they mean those attributes, wherein, according to our way of conceiving of God, consists, not in the holiness or moral goodness of God, but his greatness; such as his power, his knowledge whereby he knows all things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his omnipresence, and his awful and terrible Majesty.

The moral excellency of an intelligent voluntary being is more immediately feated in the heart or will of moral agents. That intelligent being whose will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.

This moral excellency of an intelligent being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely feeming and counterfeit, is holinefs. Therefore holirefs comprehends all the true moral excellency of intelligent beings: there is no other true virtue, but real holiness. Holiness comprehends all the true virtue of a good man, his love to God, his gracious love to men, his justice, his charity, and bowels of mercies, his gracious meekness and gentleness, and all other true Christian virtues that he has, belong to his holines. So the holiness of God in the more extensive sense of the word, and the lense in which the word is commonly, if not univerfally used concerning God in scripture, is the same with the moral excellency of the divine nature, or his purity and beauty as a moral agent, comprehending all his moral perfections, his righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness. As in holy men, their charity, Christian kindness and mercy, belongs to their holiness; so the kindness and mercy of God belongs to his holiness. Holiness in man, is but the image of God's holiness: there are not more virtues belonging to the image than are in the original: derived holiness has not more in it than is in that underived holiness which is its fountain: there is no more than grace for grace, or grace in the image, answerable to grace in the original.

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As there are two kinds of attributes in God, according to our way of conceiving of him, his moral attributes, which are fummed up in his holiness, and his natural attributes, of strength, knowledge, &c. that constitute the greatness of God; so there is a twofold image of God in man, his moral or spiritual image, which is his holiness, that is the image of God's moral excellency; (which image was lost by the fall); and God's natural image, consisting in man's reason and understanding, his natural ability, and dominion over the creatures, which

is the image of God's natural attributes.

From what has been faid, it may eafily be understood what I intend, when I fay that a love to divine things for the beauty of their moral excellency, is the beginning and spring of all holy affections. It has been already flown, under the former head, that the first objective ground of all holy affections is the supreme excellency of divine things as they are in themselves, or in their own nature: I now proceed further, and fay more particularly, that that kind of excellency of the nature of divine things, which is the first objective ground of all holy affections, is their moral excellency, or their holiness. Holy persons, in the exercise of holy affections, do love divine things primarily for their holiness: they love God, in the first place, for the beauty of his holiness or moral perfection, as being fupremely amiable in itself. Not that the saints, in the exercise of gracious affections, do love God only for his holinefs; all his attributes are amiable and glorious in their eyes; they delight in every divine perfection; the contemplation of the infinite greatness, power, and knowledge, and terrible majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their love to God for his holiness is what is most fundamental and effential in their love. Here it is that true love to God begins; all other holy love to d vine things flows from hence: this is the most elfential and diffinguishing thing that belongs to a holy. love to God, with regard to the foundation of it. A love to God for the beauty of his moral attributes, leads.

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leads to, and necessarily causes a delight in God for all his attributes; for his moral attributes cannot be without his natural attributes: for infinite holiness supposes infinite wisdom, and an infinite capacity and greatuess; and all the attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true beauty and loveliness of all intelligent beings does primarily and most effentially consist in their moral excellency or holiness. Herein consists the loveliness of the angels, without which, with all their natural perfections, their frength, and their knowledge, they would have no more loveliness than devils. It is a moral excellency alone, that is in itfelf, and on its own account, the excellency of intelligent beings: it is this that gives beauty to, or rather is the beauty of their natural perfections and qualifications. Moral excellency is the excellency of natural excellencies. Natural qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral excellency or not. Strength and knowledge doesnot render any being lovely, without holiness, but more hateful; though they render them more lovely, when joined with holiness. Thus the elect angels are the more glorious for their strength and knowledge, because these natural perfections of theirs are sanctified by their moral perfection. But though the devils are very strong, and of great natural understanding, they be not the more lovely: they are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The holiness of an intelligent creature, is the beauty of all his natural perfections. And fo it is in God, according to our way of conceiving of the divine Being: holiness is in a peculiar manner the beauty of the divine nature. Hence we often read of the beauty of holiness, Psal. xxix. 2. Psal. xcvi. 9. and cx. 3. This renders all his other attributes glorious and lovely. It is the glory of God's wildom, that it is a holy wisdom, and not a wicked subtilty and crastiness. This makes his majefty lovely; and not merely dreadful and

horrible, that it is a holy majesty. It is the glory of God's immutability, that it is a holy immutability, and

not an inflexible obstinacy in wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a sight of God's loveliness must begin here. A true love to God must begin with a delight in his holiness, and not with a delight in any other attribute; for no other attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our way of conceiving of God) it derives its loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other attributes should appear lovely, in their true loveliness, until this is feen; and it is impossible that any perfection of the divine nature should be loved with true love until this is loved. If the true loveliness of all God's perfections arises from the loveliness of his holiness; then the true love of all his perfections arises from the love of his holiness. They that do not see the glory of God's holiness, cannot see any thing of the true glory of his mercy and grace : they fee nothing of the glory of those attributes, as any excellency of God's nature, as it is in itfelf; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their interest: for these attributes are no part of the excellency of God's nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwife than as they are included in his holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a part of his moral perfection.

As the beauty of the divine nature does primarily confist in God's holiness, so does the beauty of all divine things. Herein confists the beauty of the saints, that they are saints, or holy ones: it is the moral image of God in them, which is their beauty; and that is their holiness. Herein confists the beauty and brightness of the angels of heaven, that they are holy angels, and so not devils; Dan. iv. 13. 17. 23. Matth. xxv. 31. Mark viii. 38. Acts x. 22. Rev. xiv. 10. Herein consists the beauty of the Christian religion, above all other religions, that it is so holy a religion. Herein consists the excellency of the word of God, that it is so holy; Psal. cxix. 140. Thy word is very pure,

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therefore thy fervant loveth it, ver. 128. I esteem all ' thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. Ver. 138. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous, and very faithful. And 172. My tongue shall speak of thy word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. And Pfal. xix. 7 .- 10. The law of the Lord is per-' fect, converting the foul; the testimony of the Lord is fure, making wife the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the command-" ment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The ' fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the ' judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: more to be defired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; fweeter also than honey, and the ho-'ney-comb.' Herein does primarily confift the amiableness and beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely, even in that he is the holy one of God, Acts iii. 14. and God's holy child, Acts iv. 27. and he that is holy, and he that is true, Rev. iii. 7. All the spiritual beauty of his human nature; confifting in his meekness, lowliness, patience, heavenlyness, love to God, love to men, condescension to the mean and vile, and compassion to the miserable, &c. all is summed up in his holiness. And the beauty of his divine nature, of which the beauty of his human nature is the image and reflection, does also primarily consist in his holiness. Herein primarily consists the glory of the gospel, that it is a holy gospel, and so bright an emanation of the holy beauty of God and Jesus Christ: herein consists the spiritual beauty of its doctrines, that they are holy doctrines, or doctrines according to godliness. And herein does consist the spiritual beauty of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so holy a way. And herein chiefly consists the glory of heaven, that it is the holy city, the holy Jerusalem, the habitation of God's holiness, and so of his glory, If. lxiii. 15. All the beauties of the new Jerusalem, as it is described in the two last chapters of Revelation,

Revelation, are but various representations of this: see chap. xxi. 2. 10. 11. 18, 21. 27. chap. xxii. 1. 3.

And therefore it is primarily on account of this kind of excellency, that the faints do love all these things. Thus they love the word of God, because it is very pure. It is on this account they love the saints; and on this account chiefly it is, that heaven is lovely to them, and those holy tabernacles of God amiable in their eyes: it is on this account that they love God; and on this account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their hearts delight in the doctrines of the gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the way of salvation therein revealed.

Under the head of the first distinguishing characteristic of gracious affection, I observed, that there is given to those that are regenerated, a new supernatural sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual taste, which is in its whole nature diverse from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other sive senses, and that something is perceived by a true saint in the exercise of this new sense of mind, in spiritual and divine things, as entirely different from any thing that is perceived in them by natural men, as the sweet taste of honey is diverse from the ideas men, get of honey by looking on it or feeling of it; now this that

^{* &}quot; To the right clofing with Christ's person, this is also required, to tafte the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil: else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him, as the greatest good. For we told you, that that is the right cloting with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ; he will, after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteoufness, all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn, to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable is his holiness, which is in him to make him holy too. As in marriage, it is the personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he that loves the brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 84.

that I have been speaking, viz. the beauty of holiness, is that thing in spiritual and divine things, which is perceived by this spiritual sense, that is so diverse from all that natural men perceive in them; this kind of beauty is the quality that is the immediate object of this spiritual fense; this is the sweetness that is the proper object of this spiritual taste. The scripture often reprefents the beauty and fweetness of holiness as the grand object of a spiritual taste and spiritual appetite. This was the sweet food of the holy soul of Jesus Christ, John iv. 32. 34. 'I have meat to eat that ye know not of. ____My meat is to do the will of him that fent me, and to finish his work.' I know of no part of the holy scriptures, where the nature and evidences of true and fincere godliness are so much of set purpose, and fo fully and largely infifted on and delineated, as the 119th Pfalm; the pfalmist declares his design in the first verses of the plalm, and he keeps his eye on this defign all along, and purfues it to the end: but in this pfalm the excellency of holiness is represented as the immediateobject of a spiritual taste, relish, appetite, and delight of God's law, that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature, is all along represented as the food and entertainment, and as the great object of the love, the appetite, the complacence and rejoicing of the gracious nature, which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than the honey and honey-comb; and that upon account of their holiness, as I observed before. The same psalmist declares, that this is the sweetness that a spiritual taste relishes in God's law, Psal. xix. 7. 8. 9. 10. 'The law of the Lord is perfect:—the commandment of the ' Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is clean; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; -,

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A holy love has a holy object: the holiness of love consists especially in this, that it is the love of that which is holy, as boly, or for its holiness; so that it is the holiness of the object, which is the quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy nature must needs love that in holy things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine things, which above all others is agreeable to holy nature, is holiness, because holiness must be above all other things agreeable to holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any nature than itself; holy nature must be above all things agreeable to holy nature: and so the holy nature of God and Christ, and the word of God, and other divine things, must be above all other things agreeable to the holy nature that is in the saints.

And again, an holy nature doubtless loves holy things, especially on the account of that for which sinful nature has enmity against them; but that for which chiefly finful nature is at enmity against holy things, is their holiness; it is for this, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and against the law of God, and the people of God. Now it is just arguing from contraries; from contrary causes to contrary effects; from opposite natures to opposite tendencies. We know that holiness is of a directly contrary nature to wickedness: as therefore it is the nature of wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate holiness; so it must be the nature of holiness

chiefly to tend to, and delight in holinefs.

The holy nature in the saints and angels in heaven (where the true tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the holiness of divine things. This is the divine beauty which chiefly engages the attention, admiration, and praise of the bright and burning Seraphim; Is. vi. 3. One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And Rev. iv. 8. They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. So the gloristic

fified faints, chap. xv. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.

And the scriptures represent the faints on earth as adoring God primarily on this account, and admiring and extolling all God's attributes, either as deriving loveliness from his holiness, or as being a part of it. Thus when they praise God for his power, his holiness is the beauty that engages them; Pfal. xcviii. 1. 'O fing unto the Lord a new fong, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.' So when they praise him for his justice and terrible majesty; Pfal. xcix. 2. 3. 'The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy, ver. 5. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship ' at his footstool : for he is holy. Ver. 8. 9. Thou wast 4 a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill: for the Lord our "God is holy." So when they praise God for his mercy and faithfulness; Psal. xcvii. 11. 12. ' Light ' is fown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and 4 give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. 1 ' Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none besides thee; neither is there any rock like our God.'

By this therefore all may try their affections, and particularly their love and joy. Various kinds of creatures shew the difference of their natures, very much, in the different things they relish as their proper good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a difference is there between true faints, and natural men: natural men have no fense of the goodness and excellency of holy things, at least for their holiness; they have no taste of that kind of good; and so may be said not to know that divine good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them: but the saints, by the mighty power of God, have it discovered to them; they have that supernatural, most noble and divine sense given them.

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them, by which they perceive it; and it is this that captivates their hearts, and delights them above all things; it is the most amiable and sweet thing to the heart of a true faint, that is to be found in heaven or earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his foul; and that wherein, above all things, he places his happinefs, and which he lots upon for solace and entertainment to his mind, in this world, and full fatisfaction and bleffedness in another. By this you may examine your love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the word of God, and your joy in them, and also your love to the people of God, and your delires after heaven; whether they be from a supreme delight in this fort of beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined interest in them, or expectations from them. There are many high affections, great feeming love and rapturous joys, which have nothing of this holy relish belonging to them.

Particularly, by what has been faid you may try your discoveries of the glory of God's grace and love, and your affections arising from them. The grace of God may appear lovely two ways; either as bonum utile, a profitable good to me, that which greatly serves my interest, and so suits my self-love; or as bonum formosum, a beautiful good in itself, and part of the moral and spiritual excellency of the divine nature. In this latter respect it is that the true saints have their hearts affected, and love captivated by the free grace of God

in the first place.

From the things that have been said, it appears, that if persons have a great sense of the natural persections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other sight or sense of God than that which consists in, or implies a sense of the beauty of his moral persections, it is no certain sign of grace: as particularly, men's having a great sense of the awful greatness, and terrible majesty of God; for this is only God's natural persection, and what men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the beauty of his moral persec-

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tion, and have nothing of that spiritual taste which rellishes this divine sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was faid upon the first distinguishing mark of gracious affections, that that which is spiritual, is entirely different in its nature, from all that it is possible any graceless person should be the subject of, while he continues graceless. But it is possible, that those who are wholly without grace, should have a clear fight, and very great and affecting fense of God's greatness, his mighty power, and awful majesty; for this is what the devils have, though they have loft the spiritual knowledge of God, consisting in a fense of the amiableness of his moral persections; they are perfectly destitute of any sense or relish of that kind of beauty, yet they have a very great knowledge of the natural glory of God, (if I may fo speak), or his awful greatness and majesty; this they behold, and are atfected with the apprehensions of, and therefore tremble before him. This glory of God all shall behold at the day of judgment; God will make all rational beings to behold it to a great degree indeed, angels and devils, faints and finners: Christ will manifest his infinite greatness, and awful majesty, to every one, in a most open, clear, and convincing manner, and in a light that none can refift, ' when he shall come in the glory of his Father, and every eye shall see him; when they shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the face of him that fits upon the throne, they are represented as feeing the glory of God's majesty, Is. ii. 10. 19 21. God will make all his enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting view of it, in hell, to all eternity. God hath often declared his immutable purpose to make all his enemies to know him in this refpect, in fo often annexing these words to the threatnings he denounces against them, ' And they hall know that I am the Lord; yea, he hath fworn that all men shall see his glory in this respect, Numb. xiv. 21. As truly as I live, all the earth shall be fil-'led with the glory of the Lord.' And this kind of T 2 manifestation

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manifestation of God is very often spoken of in scripture, as made, or to be made in the fight of God's enemies in this world; Exod. ix. 16. and chap. xiv. 18. and xv. 16. Pfal. lxvi. 3. and xlvi. 10. and other places innumerable. This was a manifestation which God made of himself in the fight of that wicked congregation at mount Sinai; deeply affecting them with it; so that all the people in the camp trembled. Wicked men and devils will fee, and have a great fenfe of every thing that appertains to the glory of God, but onby the beauty of his moral perfection. They will fee his infinite greatness and majesty, his infinite power, and will be fully convinced of his omniscience, and his eternity and immutability; and they will fee and know every thing appertaining to his moral attributes themselves, but only the beauty and amiableness of them: they will fee and know that he is perfectly just, and righteous, and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity; and they will fee the wonderful manifestations of his infinite goodness and free grace to the saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their eyes, but only the beauty of these moral attributes, and that beauty of the other attributes, which arises from it. And so natural men in this world are capable of having a very affecting sense of every thing else that appertains to God, but this only. Nebuchadnezzar had a great and very affecting fense of the infinite greatness and awful majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute dominion, and mighty and irrelistible power, and of his fovereignty, and that he, and all the inhabitants of the earth were nothing before him; and also had a great conviction in his conscience of his justice, and an affecting sense of his great goodness, Dan. iv. 1. 2. 3. 34. 35. 37. And the sense that Darius had of God's perfections, feems to be very much like his, Dan. vi. 25. &c. But the faints and angels do behold the glory of God confisting in thebeauty of his holiness: and it is this fight only, that will melt and humble the hearts of men, and wean them

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from the world, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A fight of the awful greatness of God, may overpower men's strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral beauty of God be hid, the enmity of the heart will remain in its full strength, no love will be inkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God shining into the heart, produces all these effects as it were with omnipotent power, which nothing can withstand.

The fense that natural men may have of the awful greatness of God may affect them various ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them, and raife their joy and praise, as their circumstances may be. This will be the natural effect of it, under the real or supposed receipt of some extraordinary mercy from God, by the influence of mere principles of nature. It has been shown already, that the receipt of kindness may, by the influence of natural principles, affect the heart with gratitude and praise to God; but if a person, at the fame time that he receives remarkable kindness from God, has a fense of his infinite greatness, and that he is but nothing in comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his gratitude and praise the higher, for kindness to one so much inferior. A sense of God's greatness had this effect upon Nebuchadnezzar, under the receipt of that extraordinary favour of his restoration; after he had been driven from men, and had his dwelling with the beafts: a fense of God's exceeding greatness raises his gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most losty terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the world to do it with him: and much more, if a natural man, at the same time that he is . greatly affected with God's infinite greatness and majesty, entertains a strong conceit that this great God has made him his child and special favourite, and promised him eternal glory in his highest love, will this have a tendency, ac ording to the course of nature, to raise his joy and praise to a great height.

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Therefore, it is beyond doubt, that too much weight has been laid, by many persons of late, on discoveries of God's greatness, awful majesty, and natural persection, operating after this manner, without any real view of the holy, lovely majesty of God. And experience does abundantly witness to what reason and scripture declare as to this matter; there having been very many persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the greatness and majesty of God, and consequentially elevated in the manner that has been spoken of, who have been very far from having appearances of a Christian spirit and temper, in any manner of proportion, or fruits in practice in any wise agreeable; but their discoveries have worked in a way contrary to the operation of truly spiritual discoveries.

Not that a sense of God's greatness and natural attributes is not exceeding useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a manifestation of the beauty of God's holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it supposes it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural men may have a sense of the natural perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the saints, than with natural men; and grace tends to enable men to see these things in a better manner, than natural men do; and not only enables them to see God's natural attributes, but that beauty of those attributes, which (according to our way of conceiving of God) is derived from his holiness.

IV. Gracious affections do arise from the mind's being enlightened, richly and spiritually to understand

or apprehend divine things.

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from the information of the understanding, seme spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel; he has some clearer and better view than he had before, when he was not affected: either he receives some understanding of divine things that is new to him; or has his former knowledge renewed after the view was decayed; I John iv. 7. Every one that loveth, knoweth God. Phil. i. 9. I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment. Rom. x. 2. They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. Col. iii. 10. The new man, which is renewed in knowledge. Pfal. xliii. 3. 4. O fend out thy light and thy truth; e let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy John vi. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man there. fore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.' Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart and enlarges the affections, and so opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven; Luke xi. ' 52. Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.'

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high †. Indeed they have

fome:

+ 'Many that have had mighty strong affections at first' conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and con sume, and pine, and die away: and now their hypocrify is manifest; if not to all the world by open profaneness, yet to the differning eye of living Christians, by a formal, barren, unfavoury, unfruitful heart and course; because they never had light to conviction enough as yet. ——It is strangeto fee some people carried with mighty affection against fin and hell, and after Christ. And what is the hell you fear? A dreadful place. What is Christ? They scarce know so. much as devils do; but that is all. Oh trust them not ! Many have, and these will fall away to some luft, or opinion, or pride, or world; and the reason is, they never had light enough, John v. 35. ' John was a burning and fhining ' light, and they did joy in him for a feason; 'yet glorious as it was, they faw not Christ by it, especially not with divine light. It is rare to fee Christians full both of light and affection. And therefore consider of this; many a man has been well brought up, and is of a sweet loving nature, mild and gentle, and harmless, likes and loves the best things, and his meaning, and mind, and heart is good, and has

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fome new apprehensions which they had not before, Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that? he apprehends, or that his mind conceives of. But in many perfons those apprehensions or conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. As for instance; when a person is affected with a lively idea, fuddenly excited in his mind, of some shape, or very beautiful pleasant form of countenance, or some fhining light, or other glorious outward appearance: here is something apprehended or conceived by the mind; but there is nothing of the nature of instruction in it; perfons become never the wifer by fuch things, or more knowing about God, or a mediator between God and man, or the way of falvation by Christ, or any thing contained in any of the doctrines of the gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his nature; nor have they any further understanding of his word, or any of his ways or works. Truly spiritual and gracious affections are not raised after this manner; these arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner, the coming to a new understanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fulness, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of falvation by Chrift, whereby he now fees how it is, and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once :

more in heart than in shew; and so hopes all shall go well with him. I say, there may lie greatest hypocrify under greatest affections; especially if they want light. You shall he hardened in your hypocrify by them. I never liked violent affections and pangs, but only such as were dropped in by light; because those come from an external principle, and last not, but these do. Men are not affrighted by the light of the sun, though clearer than the lightning.' Shepard's Parable, Part 1. p. 146,

once were foolishness to him. Such enlightenings of the understanding as these, are things entirely different in their nature, from strong ideas of shapes and colours, and outward brightness and glory, or sounds and voices. That all gracious affections do arise from some instruction or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such impression on the imagination, are not gracious affections, besides the things observed before, which make this evident.

Hence also it appears, that affections arising from texts of scripture coming to the mind are vain, when no instruction received in the understanding from those texts, or any thing taught in those texts, is the ground of the affection, but the manner of their coming to the When Christ makes the scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, it is by opening the scriptures to their understandings, Luke xxiv. 32. Did not our heart burn within us, while ' he talked with us by the way, and while he opened ' to us the scriptures?' It appears also that the affection which is occasioned by the coming of a text of scripture must be vain, when the affection is founded on fomething that is supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other fcripture; because such supposed instruction is not real instruction, but a mistake, and misapprehension of the mind. As for instance, when persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some scripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their fins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like; this is a mistake or misapprehension; for the scripture no where reveals the individual persons who are beloved, expressly; but only by consequence, by revealing the qualifications of persons that are beloved of God: and therefore this matter is not to be learned from scripture any other way than by consequence, and from thele qualifications; for things are not to be learned from

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Affections really arise from ignorance, rather than instruction, in these instances which have been mennoned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. As some, when they find themselves free of speech in prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and so their affections are fet a-going and increased; when they look not into the cause of this freedom of speech, which may arise many other ways besides God's spiritual presence. So some are much affected with some apt thoughts that come into their minds about the scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they ascribe many of the workings of their own minds, which they have 'a high opinion of, and are pleased and taken with, to the special immediate influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their privilege. And there are fome instances of persons, in whom it seems manifest, that the first ground of their affection is some bodily. fensation. The animal spirits, by some cause, (and probably fometimes by the devil), are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable motion, caufing persons to feel pleafantly in their bodies; the animal spirits are put into such a motion as is wont to be connected with the exhibaration of the mind; and the foul, by the laws of the union of foul and body, hence feels pleasure. The motion of the animal spirits does not first arise from any affection or apprehension of the mind whatfoever; but the very first thing that is felt, is an exhilaration of the animal spirits, and a pleasant external fensation it may be in their breasts. Hence through ignorance, the person being surprised, begins to think, furely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raised: there is first great joy; and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle. For though, as I obferved before, it is the foul only that is the feat of the affections ;

affections; yet this hinders not but that bodily fenfations may, in this manner, be an occasion of affections in the mind.

And if men's religious affections do truly arise from fome instruction or light in the understanding; yet the affection is not gracious, unless the light which is the ground of it be spiritual. Affections may be excited by that understanding of things, which they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of the faculties of the mind. Men may be much affected by knowledge of things of religion that they obtain this way; as some philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the discoveries they have made in mathematics and natural philo-So men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God affilts men's faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have in some degree, by only the ordinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in scripture, that were once enlightened: but these affections are not spiritual.

There is such a thing, if the scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, as a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things, that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints have nothing of. It is certainly a kind of understanding, apprehending or discerning of divine things, that natural men have nothing of, which the apostle speaks of, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the

Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him;

'neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' It is certainly a kind of seeing or discerning spiritual things peculiar to the saints, which is spoken of, I John iii. 6. 'Whosoever sinneth, hath not

feen him, neither known him. 3 John 11. He that doth evil, hath not feen God. And John vi. 40.

' This is the will of him that fent me, that every one

that feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. Chap. xiv. 19. The world feeth me o no more; but ye fee me. Chap. xvii. 3. This is eter-' nal life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou haft fent. Matth. xi. 27. ' No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. John xii. 45. ' He that feeth me, feeth him that fent me. 10. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee. Phil. iii. 8. I count all things but lofs, for ' the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: ver. 10. That I may know him.'-And innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which shew the same. And that there is such a thing as an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an understanding of divine things, which the scripture calls spiritual understanding, Col. i. o. 'We do not cease to pray for you, and to defire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom ' and spiritual understanding.' It has been already shown, that that which is spiritual, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the subjects of.

From hence it may be furely inferred wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, until they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual fense, which the souls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed.

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But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is, which the faints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the scripture; the apostle very plainly teaches, that the great thing discovered by Spiritual light, and understood by Spiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. 'But if our gospel be hid, it ' is hid to them that are loft; in whom the god of this 4 world hath blinded the minds of them that believe ' not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, ' who is the image of God, should shine unto him; together with ver. 6. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glo-' ry of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. And chap. ' iii. 18. preceding, But we all with open face, be-4 holding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are chan-' ged into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' And it must needs be so, for, as has been before observed, the scripture often teaches, that all true religion summarily consists in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, must be the knowledge of the loveliness of divine things. For doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of love, is the knowledge of lovelinefs. What that beauty of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was shewed under the last head insisted on, viz. that it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or fense of this, that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily confift. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing elfe; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things, besides the beauty of their moral excellency, and those properties and qualities of divine things which this

beauty is the foundation of, but what natural men and devils can fee and know, and will know fully and clear-

ly to all eternity.

From what has been faid, therefore, we come necesfarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists; viz. that it consists in 'a

· fense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweete ness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine

things, together with all that discerning and know-' ledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and

flows from fuch a fense.'

Spiritual understanding confists primarily in a sense of heart of that spiritual beauty. I fay, a sense of heart; for it is not speculation merely that is concerned in this kind of understanding; nor can there be a clear diftinction made between the two faculties of understanding and will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this matter. When the mind is fensible of the sweet beauty and amiableness of a thing, that implies a sensibleness of fweetness and delight in the presence of the idea of it: and this fensibleness of the amiableness or delightfulness of beauty, carries in the very nature of it, the fense of the heart; or an leffect and impression the foul is the fubject of, as a substance possessed of taste, inclination and will.

There is a distinction to be made between a mere notional understanding, wherein the mind only beholds: things in the exercise of a speculative faculty; and the fense of the heart, wherein the mind does not only speculate and behold, but relishes and feels. That fort of knowledge, by which a man has a fensible perception of amiableness and loathsomness, or of sweetness and naufeousness, is not just the same fort of knowledge with that by which he knows what a triangle is, and what a square is. The one is mere speculative knowledge the other fentible knowledge, in which more than the mere intellect is concerned; the heart is the proper subject of it, or the soul as a being that not only beholds, but has inclination, and is pleased or dis-

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pleased. And yet there is the nature of instruction. In it; as he that has perceived the sweet taste of honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only look-

ed upon and felt of it.

The apostle feems to make a distinction between mere freculative knowledge of the things of religion, and spiritual knowledge, in calling that ' the form of knowledge, and of the truth; Rom. ii. 20. Which hath the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law? Thedatter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tafling; 2 Car. ii. 14. Now thanks be to God; which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and ma-. keth manifest the favour of this knowledge in every blace. Matth. xvi. 23. Thou favourest not the things that be of God, but those things that be of men. 1 Pet. ii. 2. 3. As new born babes desire the fin-" cere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby; if " So be ye have tafted that the Lord is gracious. Cant. i. 3. Because of the favour of thy good ointments, thy 4 name is as continent poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee; compared with I John ii. 20. But ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things.'

Spiritual understanding primarily consists in this ferse, or taste of the moral beauty of divine things; so that no knowledge can be called spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But secondarily, it includes all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, which depends upon and slows from

fuch a fenfe.

When the true beauty and amiableness of the holiness or true moral good that is in divine things is discovered to the fool, it as it were opens a new world to its views. This shews the glory of all the perfections of God, and of every thing appertaining to the divine Being. For, as was observed before, the beauty of all arises from God's moral perfection. This shews the glory of all God's works, both of creation and providence. For it is the special glory of them, that God's holiness,

Solinefs, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness are fo manifested in them; and without these moral perfections, there would be no glory in that power and skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral perfections, is the special end of all the works of God's hands. By this fense of the moral beauty of divine things, is understood the sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator; for it is only by the discovery of the beauty of the moral perfection of Christ, that the believer is let into the knowledge of the excellency of his person, so as to know any thing more of it than the devils do; and it is only by the knowledge of the excellency of Christ's person, that any know his sufficiency as a mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by feeing the excellency of Christ's person, that the saints are made sensible of the preciousness of his blood, and its sufficiency to atone for fin; for therein confifts the preciousness of Christ's blood, that it is the blood of so excellent and amiable a person. And on this depends the meritoriousness of his obedience, and fufficiency and prevalence of his intercession. By this fight of the moral beauty of divine things, is feen the beauty of the way of falvation by Christ; for that consists in the beauty of the moral perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every step of this method of salvation, from beginning to end. By this is feen the firness and suitableness of this way; for this wholly confifts in its tendency to deliver us from fin and hell, and to bring us to the happiness which confifts in the possession and enjoyment of moral good, in a way sweetly agreeing with God's moral perfections. And in the way's being contrived so as to attain these ends, consists the excellent wisdom of that way. By this is feen the excellency of the word of God. Take away all the moral beauty and sweetness in the word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless thing. By this is seen the true foundation of our duty, the worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honoured, loved, submitted to, and ferved,

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as he required of us, and the amiableness of the duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true evil of fin; for he who fees the beauty of holinels, must necessarily fee the hatefulness of fin, its contrary. By this men understand the true glory of heaven, which confifts in the beauty and happiness that is in holinefs. By this is feen the amiablenefs and happiness of both faints and angels. He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world, which is the fulness of all things, without which all the world is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worfe than nothing. Unless this is feen, nothing is feen that is worth the feeing; for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding. This is the beauty of the Godhead, and the divinity of divinity, (if I may fo fpeak), the good of the infinite fountain of good; without which God himfelf (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite evil; without which, we ourselves had better never have been: and without which there had better have been no being. He therefore in effect knows nothing, that knows not this; his knowledge is but the shadow of knowledge, or the form of knowledge, as the apostle calls it. Well therefore may the scriptures represent those who are destitute of that spiritual sense, by which is perceived the beauty of holiness, as totally blind, deaf, and fenseless, yea, dead. And well may regeneration, in which this divine fense is given to the foul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind eyes, and railing the dead, and bringing a person into a new world. For if what has been faid be confidered, it will be manifest, that when a person has this sense and knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he knew all things after the flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new creature, old things are paffed away, behold, all things are become new; agree-4 able to 2 Cor. v. 16. 17.

And besides the things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this sense of spiritual beauty, all true experimental knowledge of religion, which is of itself as it were a new world of knowledge. He that sees not the beauty of holiness, knows not what one of the graces of God's Spirit is, he is destitute of any idea or conception of all gracious exercises of soul, and all holy comforts an ddelights, and all effects of the saving influences of the Spirit of God on the heart; and so is ignorant of the greatest works of God, the most important and glorious effects of his power upon the creature; and also is wholly ignorant of the saints as saints, he knows not what they are; and in effect is ig-

norant of the whole spiritual world.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural sense which has been spoken of, makes a great change in a man. And were it not for the very imperfect degree, in which this sense is commonly given at first, or the small degree of this glorious light that first dawns upon the foul; the change made by this spiritual opening of the eyes in converfion, would be much greater, and more remarkable every way, than if a man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four fenses, should continue so long a time, and then at once should have the sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear light of the fun, discovering a world of visible objects. For though fight be more noble than any of the other external fenfes, yet this spiritual sense which has been spoken of, is. infinitely more noble than that, or any other principle of discerning that a man naturally has, and the object of this fense infinitely greater and more import-

This fort of understanding or knowledge, is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections do proceed; by which therefore all affections are to be tried. Those affections that arise wholly from any other kind of knowledge, or do result

from any other kind of apprehensions of mind, are vain +.

From what has been faid, may be learned wherein the most effential difference lies between that light or understanding which is given by the common influences of the Spirit of God, on the hearts of natural men, and that saving instruction which is given to the saints. The latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the holy beauty that is in divine things; which is the only true moral good, and which the soul of sallen man is by nature totally blind to. The former consists only in a further understanding, through the assistance of natural principles, of those things which men may know,

+ " Take heed of contenting yourselves with every kind of knowledge. Do not worship every image of your own heads; especially you that fall short of truth, or the knowledge of it. For when you have some, there may be yet that wanting, which may make you fincere. There are many men of great knowledge, able to teach themselves, and others too; and yet their hearts are unfound. How comes this to pass? Is it because they have so much light? No; but because they want much. And therefore content not yourselves with every knowledge. There is some knowledge which men have by the light of nature, (which leaves them without excuse), from the book of creation; fome by power of education; some by the light of the law, whereby men know their fin and evils; fome by the letter of the gospel; and so men may know much, and speak well; and so in seeing, see not: some by the Spirit, and may fee much, so as to prophecy in Christ's name, and yet bid depart, Matth. vii. Now there is a light of glory, whereby the electifee things in another manner: to tell you how, they cannot; it is the beginning of light in heaven; and the same Spirit that fills Chrift, filling their minds, that they know, by this anointing, all things; which if ever you have, you must become babes and fools in your own eyes. God will never write his law in your minds, until all the scribblings of it are blotted out. Account all your knowledge loss for the gaining of this. It is sad to see many a man pleasing himself in his own dreaming delusions; yet the poor creature in seeing, sees not; which is God's heavy curse upon men under greatest means, and which lays all waste and desolate.' Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 147.

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know, in some measure, by the alone ordinary exercise of their faculties. And this knowledge confifts only in the knowledge of those things pertaining to religion, which are natural. Thus for instance, in those awakenings and convictions of conscience, that natural men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no knowledge of the true moral beauty which is in divine things; but only affilts the mind to a clearer idea of the guilt of fin, or its relation to a punishment, and connection with the evil of fuffering, (without any fight of its true moral evil, or odiousness as sin), and a clearer idea of the natural perfections of God, wherein confifts, not his tholy beauty and glory, but his awful and terrible It is a clear fight of this, that will fully greatness. awaken the consciences of wicked men at the day of judgment, without any spiritual light. And it is a leffer degree of the same, that awakens the consciences of natural men, without spiritual light in this world. The Same discoveries are in some measure given in the conscience of an awakened finner in this world, which will be given more fully, in the consciences of finners at the day of judgment. The fame kind of fight or apprehension of God, in a lesser degree, makes awakened finners in this world fensible of the dreadful guilt of fin, against fo great and terrible a God. and fenfible of its amazing punishment, and fills them with fearful apprehensions of divine wrath; that will thoroughly convince all wicked men, of the infinitely dreadful nature and guilt of fin, and aftonish them with apprehensions of wrath, when Christ shall come in the glory of his power and majefty, and every eye shall fee thim, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. And in those common illuminations, which are sometimes given to natural men, exciting in them Some kind of religious defire, love, and joy, the mind is only affilted to a clearer apprehension of the natural good that is in divine things. Thus fometimes, under common illuminations, men are raifed with the ideas of the natural good that is in heaven; as its outward glory, its ease, its honour and advancement, a being there

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there the objects of the high favour of God, and the great respect of men and angels, &c. So there are many things exhibited in the gospel, concerning God and Christ, and the way of salvation, that have a natural good them, which fuits the natural principle of felflove. Thus in that great goodness of God to sinners, and the wonderful dying love of Christ, there is a natural good, which all men love, as they love themselves; as well as a spiritual and holy beauty, which is seen only by the regenerate. Therefore there are many things appertaining to the word of God's grace delivered in the gospel, which may cause natural men, when they hear it, anon with joy to receive it. All that love which natural men have to God, and Christ, and Christian virtues, and good men, is not from any fight of the amiableness of the holiness, or true moral excellency of these things; but only for the sake of the natural good there is in them. All natural men's hatred of fin, is as much from principles of nature, as men's hatred of a tyger for his rapaciousness, or their aversion to a ferpent for his poison and hurtfulness; and all their love of Christian virtue, is from no higher principle than their love of a man's good nature, which appears amiable to natural men; but no otherwise than filver and gold appears amiable in the eyes of a merchant, or than the blackness of the soil is beautiful in the eyes of the farmer.

From what has been faid of the nature of spiritual understanding, it appears, that spiritual understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal knowledge, or in having suggested to the mind any new proposition, not before read or heard of: for it is plain that this suggesting of new propositions, is a thing entirely diverse from giving the mind a new taste or relish of beauty and sweetness. It is also evident, that spiritual knowledge

^{*} Calvin, in his Inflitutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1. fays, It is not the office of the Spirit that is promifed us, to make new and before unheard-of revelations, or to coin some new kind of doctrine, which tends to draw us away from the received

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does not consist in any new doctrinal explanation of any part of the scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal knowledge, or the knowledge of propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any part of scripture, is only giving us to understand, what are the propositions contained

or taught in that part of foripture.

Hence it appears, that the spiritual understanding of the scripture, does not confist in opening to the mind the mystical meaning of the scripture, in its parables, types, and allegories; for this only a doctrinal explication of the fcripture. He that explains what is meant by the flony ground, and the feed's fpringing up fuddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what propositions or doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by Jacob's ladder, and the angels of God afcending and descending on it, or what was typified by Joshua's leading Israel through Tordan, only shews what propositions are hid in these passages. And many men can explain these types, who have no spiritual knowledge. It is possible that a man might know how to interpret all the types, parables, enigmas, and allegories in the Bible, and not have one beam of spiritual light in his mind; because he may not have the least degree of that spiritual sense of the holy beauty of divine things which has been spoken of, and may fee nothing of this kind of glory in any thing contained in any of these mysteries, or any other part of the scripture. It is plain, by what the apostle says, that a man might understand all such mysteries, and have no faving grace; I Cor. xiii. 2. " And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries.

ecived doctrine of the gospel; but to seal and confirm to us that very doctrine which is by the gospel.' And in the same place he speaks of some, that in those days maintained the contrary notion, 'pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as persons that were governed by a most haughty self-conceit; and not so properly to be looked upon as only labouring under a mistake, as driven by a fort of raving madness.'

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fireth me nothing.' They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an opinion of their own spiritual attainments, from notions that come into their minds, of the mystical meaning of these and those passages of scripture, as though it was a spiritual understanding of these passages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their affections highly raised; and what has been said, shews the vanity of such affections.

From what has been faid, it is also evident, that it is not spiritual knowledge for persons to be informed of their duty, by having it immediately suggested to their minds, that fuch and fuch outward actions or deeds are the will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's manner thus to fignify his will to his people, by immediate inward fuggestions, such suggestions have nothing of the nature of spiritual light. Such kind of knowledge would only be one kind of doctrinal knowledge; a proposition concerning the will of God, is as properly a doctrine of religion, as a proposition concerning the nature of God, or a work of God; and an having either of these kinds of propositions, or any other proposition. declared to a man, either by speech, or inward suggestion, differs valtly from an having the holy beauty of divine things manifested to the soul, wherein spiritual. knowledge does most essentially consist. Thus there was no spiritual light in Balaam; though he had the will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit of God from time to time, concerning the way that he: should go, and what he should do and fay.

It is manifest therefore, that a being led and directed in this manner, is not that holy and spiritual leading of the Spirit of God, which is peculiar to the saints, and a distinguishing mark of the sons of God, spoken of Rom. wiii. 14. 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, Gal. v. 18. But if ye be led by

the Spirit, ye are not under the law.'

And if persons have the will of God concerning their actions, suggested to them by some text of scripture, suddenly

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fuddenly and extraordinarily brought to their minds, which text, as the words lay in the Bible before they came to their minds, related to the action and behaviour of some other person, but they suppose, as God fent the words to them, he intended fomething further by them, and meant fuch a particular action of theirs; I fay, if persons should have the will of God thus suggested to them with texts of scripture, it alters not the cafe. The fuggestion being accompanied with an apt text of scripture, does not make the fuggestion to be of the nature of spiritual instruction. As for instance, if a person in New-England, on some occasion, were at a lofs whether it was his duty to go into some popish or heathenish land, where he was like to be exposed to many difficulties and dangers, and should pray to God that he would shew him the way of his duty; and after earnest prayer, should have those words which God spake to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. suddenly and extraordinarily brought to his mind, as if they were spoken to him; Fear not to go down into Egypt; and I will go with thee; and I will also furely bring thee up again.' In which words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his mind, they related only to Jacob, and his behaviour; yet he supposes that God has a further meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be understood in a new sense, that by Egypt is to be understood this particular country he has in his mind, and that the action intended is his going thither, and that the meaning of the promise is, that God would bring him back into New-England again. There is nothing of the nature of a spiritual or gracious leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the nature of spiritual understanding in it. Thus to understand texts of scripture, is not to have a spiritual understanding of them. Spiritually to understand the scripture, is rightly to understand what is in the scripture, and what was in it-before it was understood: it to understand rightly, what used to be contained in meaning of it, and not the making a new meaning. When

When the mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the scripture, it is enabled to see that in the scripture, which before was not seen by reason of blindness. But if it was by reason of blindness, that is an evidence that the same meaning was in it before. otherwise it would have been no blindness norto see it: it is no blindness not to see a meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the eyes to understand the scripture, is to open the eyes, Pfal. cxix 18. Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous ' things out of thy law;' which argues, that the reason why the same was not seen in the scripture before, was, that the eyes were shut; which would not be the case, if the meaning that is now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the scripture, by the manner of the scripture's coming to my mind. making a new meaning to the scripture, is the same thing as making a new scripture; it is properly adding to the word, which is threatened with so dreadful a curfe. Spiritually to understand the scripture, is to have the eyes of the mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual excellency of the glorious things contained in the true meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever fince it was written; to behold the amiable and bright manifestations of the divine perfections, and of the excellency and fufficiency of Christ, and the excellency and fuitableness of the way of falvation by Christ, and the spiritual glory of the precepts and promises of the scripture, &c. which things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been feen before, if it had not been for blindness, without having any new fense added, by the words being sent by God to a particular person, and spoken anew to him, with a new meaning.

And as to a gracious leading of the Spirit, it confifts in two things: partly in instructing a person in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully inducing him to comply with that instruction. But so far as the gracious leading of the Spirit lies in instruction, it confists in a person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguish-

ing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have shewn that spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a tafte or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning. As he who has a true relish of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it; he stands in no need of a train of reasoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he fees be a beautiful countenance or no; he needs nothing, but only the glance of his eye. He who has a rectified mufical ear, knows whether the found he hears be true harmony; he does not need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate knows what is good food, as foon as he taftes it, without the reasoning of a physician about it. There is a holy beauty and fweetness in words and actions, as well as a natural beauty in countenances and founds, and fweetness in food; Job xii. 11. Doth not the ear try words, and the mouth taste his meat? When a holy and amiable action is fuggefted to the thoughts of a holy foul: that foul, if in the lively exercise of its spiritual tafte, at once fees a beauty in it, and fo inclines to it, and closes with it. On the contrary, if an unworthy unholy action be suggested to it, its sanctified eyes sees no beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its fanctified tafte relishes no sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yea, its holy taste and appetite leads it to think of that which is truly lovely, and naturally fuggests it; as a healthy taste and appetite naturally fuggests the idea of its proper object. Thus a holy person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy taste and disposition of heart; whereby, in the lively exercise of grace, he easily distinguishes good and evil, and knows at once what is a fuitable amiable behaviour towards God, and towards man, in this case

and the other, and judges what is right, as it were fpontaneously, and of himself, without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the Pharisees, that they 'did not, even of their own felves, judge what was right,' without needing miracles to prove it, Luke xii. 57. The apostle seems plainly to have respect to this way of judging of spiritual beauty, in Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye transformed by the remaining of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.'

There is such a thing as good taste of natural beauty, (which learned men often speak of), that is exercised about temporal things, in judging of them; as about the just ness of a speech, the goodness of style, the beauty of a poem, the gracefulness of deportment, &c. A late great philosopher of our nation, writes thus uponit +; 'To have a taste, is to give things their real va-' lue, to be touched with the good, to be shocked with the ill; not to be dazzled with false lustres, but infpight of all colours, and every thing that might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. Taste and judgment, then, should be the same thing; and yet it is easy to discern a difference. The judgment forms its opinions from reflection: the reason on this occasion ' fetches a kind of circuit, to arrive at its end; it sup-! poses principles, it draws consequences, and it judges; but not without a thorough knowledge of the case; for ' that after it has pronounced, it is ready to render a reason of its decrees. Good taste observes none of these formalities; ere it has time to consult, it has taken its fide; as foon as ever the object is presented it, the impression is made, the sentiment formed, ask on more of it. As the ear is wounded with a harsh found, as the fmell is foothed with an agreeable odour, before ever the reason have meddled with those objects to judge of them, so the taste opens it-

[†] Chambers's dictionary, under the word TASTE.

felf at once, and prevents all reflection. They may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the secret reasons of its conduct; but it was not in its power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at all, and what pains soever it uses, cannot discover what it was determined it to think as it did. This conduct is very different from that the judgment observes in its decisions: unless we chuse to say, that good taste is as it were a first motion, or a kind of instinct of right reason, which hurries on with rapidity, and conducts more securely, than all the reasonings he could make; it is a first glance of the eye, which discovers to us the nature and relations of things in a moment.

Now as there is such a kind of taste of the mind as this, which philosophers speak of, whereby persons are guided in their judgment, of the natural beauty, gracefulness, propriety, nobleness, and sublimity of speeches and actions, whereby they judge as it were by the glance of the eye, or by inward sensation, and the first impression of the object; so there is likewise such a thing as a divine taste, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are in like manner led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy beauty of actions; and that more easily, readily, and accurately, as they have more or less of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus 'the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their behaviour in the world.'

A holy disposition and spiritual taste, where grace is strong and lively, will enable a soul to determine what actions are right and becoming Christians, not only more speedily, but far more exactly, than the greatest abilities without it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which some habits of mind, and dispositions of heart, of a nature inferior to true grace, will teach and guide a man in his actions. As for instance, if a man be a very good-natured man, his good-nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongst man-

kind.

kind, and will direct him, on every occasion, to those speeches and actions, which are agreeable to rules of goodness, than the strongest reason will a man of a morose temper. So if a man's heart be under the influence of an entire friendship, and most endeared affection to another; though he be a man of an indifferent capacity, yet this habit of his mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a speech and deportment, or manner of behaviour, which shall in all respects be. fweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent disposition of heart, than the greatest capacity without it. He has as it were a spirit within him, that guides him; the habit of his mind is attended with a tafte, by which he immediately relishes that air and mien which is beneyolent, and difrelishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other in a moment, more precifely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out in many hours. As the nature and inward tendency of a stone, or other heavy body, that is let fall from a loft, shews the way to the centre of the earth, more exactly in an instant, than the ablest mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate: observations, in a whole day. Thus it is that a spiritual disposition and taste teaches and guides a man in his behaviour in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable disposition, will direct a person. of mean capacity to fuch a behaviour, as is agreeable to Christian rules of humility, meekness, and charity, far more readily and precifely than the most diligent study. and elaborate reasonings, of a man of the strongest faculties, who has not a Christian spirit within him. So also will a Spirit of love to God, and holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in God, and an heavenly disposition, teach and guide a man in his behaviour.

It is an exceeding difficult thing for a wicked many destitute of Christian principles in his heart to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the life and beauty, and heavenly sweetness of a X.3 truly truly holy, humble, Christ-like behaviour. He knows not how to put on these garments; neither do they sit him; Eccl. x. z. z. 'A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart is at his lest. Yea also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wise dom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool: with ver. 15. The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city. Prov. x. 32. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable. Chap. xv. 2. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. And chap. xvi. 23. The heart of the righteous teacheth his.

" mouth, and addeth learning to his lips."

The faints in thus judging of actions by a spiritual talte, have not a particular recourse to the express rules of God's word, with respect to every word and action that is before them, the good or evil of which they thus judge of: but yet their tafte itself in general, is subject to the rule of God's word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it. As a man of a rectified palate judges of particular morfels by his tafte; but yet his palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain rules and reasons. But a spiritual tafte of foul mightily helps the foul in its reasonings on the word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its tales; as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, and naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the word of God; and causes the true meaning, most naturally to come to mind; through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a fanctified foul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's word. Yea, this harmony tends to bring the texts themselves to mind, on proper occafions; as the particular state of the stomach and palate tends to bring fuch particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that state. Thus the children of God are led by the Spirit of God' in judging of actions themselves, and in their meditations upon, and judging

judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy word: and fo God 'teaches them his statutes, and causes them 'to understand the way of his precepts;' which the

pfalmist so often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceeding diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion; and has in it no talting the true excellency of things, or judging or discerning the nature of things at all. They do not determine what is the will of God by any tafte or relish, or any manner of judgment of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done; there is no fuch thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, is imparted that true wisdom, and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glowworm; and that which Balaam and Saul (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been said of the nature of spiritual understanding, as consisting most effentially in a divine supernatural sense and relish of the heart, not only shews that
there is nothing of it in this salsely supposed leading of
the Spirit, which has been now spoken of; but also
shows the difference between spiritual understanding,
and all kinds and forms of enthusiasm, all imaginary
sights of God, and Christ, and heaven, all supposed witnessing of the Spirit, and testimonies of the love of God
by immediate inward suggestion; and all impressions of
suture events, and immediate revelations of any secret
sacts whatsoever; all enthusiastical impressions and applications of words of scripture, as though they were
words now immediately spoken by God to a particular
person, in a new meaning, and carrying something

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more in them, than the words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all interpretations of the myllical meaning of the scripture, by supposed immediate revelation. None of these things consist in a divine sense and relish of the heart, of the holy beauty and excellency of divine things; nor have they any thing to do with fuch a fense; but all consist in impressions in the head; all are to be referred to the head of impressions on the imagination, and confift in the exciting external ideas in the mind, either in ideas of outward shapes and colours, or words spoken, or letters-written, or ideas of things external and fenfible, belonging to actions done, or events accomplished or to be accomplished. An enthusiastical Supposed manifestation of the love of God, is made by the exciting an idea of a smiling countenance, or some other pleasant outward appearance, or by the idea of pleafant words fpoken, or written, excited in the imagination, or fome pleafant bodily fenfation. So when persons have an imaginary revelation of some secret fact, it is by exciting external ideas; either of some words, i nplying a declaration of that fact, or some visible or fensible circumstances of fuch a fact. So the supposed leading of the Spirit, to do the will of God, in outward behaviour, is either by exciting the idea of words (which are outward things) in their minds, either the words of scripture, or other words, which they look upon as an immediate command of God; or elfe by exciting and impressing strongly the ideas of the outward actions themselves. So when an interpretation of a scripture type or allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting words, as though one fecretly whispered and told the meaning, or by exciting other ideas in the imagination.

Such fort of experiences and discoveries as these commonly raise the affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great height, and make a mighty uproar in both soul and body. And a very great part of the salse religion that has been in the world, from one age to ano-

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ther, confilts in such discoveries as these, and in the affections that flow from them. In fuch things confifted the experiences of the ancient Pythagoreans among the heathen, and many others among them, who had strange ecstasses and raptures, and pretended to a a divine afflatus, and immediate revelations from heaven. In such things as these seem to have consisted the experiences of the Essenes, an ancient sect among the Jews, at and after the times of the apostles. In fuch things as these consisted the experiences of many of the ancient Gnostics, and the Montanists, and many other fects of ancient heretics, in the primitive ages of the Christian church. And in such things as these confifted the pretended immediate converse with God and Christ, and saints and angels of heaven, of the Monks, Anchorites, and Recluses, that formerly abounded in the church of Rome. In fuch things confifted the pretended high experiences, and great spirituality of many fects of enthusiasts, that swarmed in the world af ter the Reformation; fuch as the Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists, the followers of N. Stork, Th. Muncer, Jo. Becold, Henry Pfeiser, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eislebius; and the many wild enthusiasts that were in England in the days of Oliver Cromwell; and the followers of Mrs Hutchison, in New-England; as appears by the particular and large accounts given of all these sects by that eminently holy man, Mr Samuel Rutherford, in his 'Display of the spiritual Antichrist.' And in fuch things as these consisted the experiences of the late French prophets, and their followers. And in these things seems to lie the religion of the many kinds of enthusialts of the present day. It is by such fort of religion as this chiefly that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: and it is that which he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy revivals of religion, from the beginning of the Christian church to this day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious work, then

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then the old ferpent, as fast as possible, and by all means introduces this baftard religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from time to time foon brought all things into confusion. The pernicious confequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we fee and are amazed with the awful effects of it, and the difinal defolation it has made. If the revival of true religion be very great in its beginning, yet if this bastard comes in, there is danger of its doing as Gideon's bastard Ahimelech did, who never left until he had flain all his threefcore and ten true-born fons, excepting one, that was forced to fly. Great and strict therefore should be the watch and guard that ministers maintain against such things, especially at a time of great awakening: for men, especially the common people, are easily bewitched with such things; they having fuch a glaring and gliftering thew of high religion; and the devil hiding his own shape, and appearing as an angel of light, that men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him.

The imagination or phantaly feems to be that wherein are formed all those delusions of Satan, which those are carried away with, who are under the influence of false religion, and counterfeit graces and affections. Here is the devil's grand lurking-place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits. It is very much to be doubted, whether the devil can come at the foul of man at all to affect it, or to excite any thought or motion, or produce any effect whatfoever in it, any other way, than by the phantafy; which is that power of the foul; by which it receives, and is the subject of the species, or ideas of outward and fenfible things. As to the laws and means which the Creator has established, for the intercourse and communication of unbodied spirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what medium they manifest their thoughts to each other, or excite thoughts in each other. But as to spirits that are united to bodies, those bodies God has united them to, are their medium of communication.

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They have no other medium of acting on other creatures, or being acted on by them, than the body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that Satan can excite any thought, or produce any effect in the foul of man. any otherwife, than by some motion of the animal spirits, or by cauling some motion or alteration in something which appertains to the body. There is this reason to think that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the foul immediately, or any other way than by the medium of the body, viz. that he cannot immediately fee or know the thoughts of the foul: it is abundantly declared in the scripture, to be peculiar to the omniscient God to do that. But it is not likely that the devil can immediately produce an effect, which is out of the reach of his immediate view. It feems unreasonable to suppose, that his immediate agency should be out of his own fight, or that it should be impossible for him to fee what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose, that any spirit or intelligent agent, should by the act of his will, produce effects according to his understanding, or agreeable to his own thoughts, and that immediately, and yet the effects produced be beyond the reach of his understanding, or where he can have no immediate perception or difcerning at all? But if this be so, that the devil cannot produce thoughts in the foul immediately, or any other way than by the animal spirits, or by the body, then it follows, that he never brings to pals any thing in the foul, but by the imagination or phantafy, or by exciting external ideas For we know that alterations in the body do immediately excite no other fort of ideas in the mind, but external ideas, or ideas of the outward fenses, or ideas which are of the same outward nature. As to reflection, abstraction, reasoning, &c. and those thoughts and inward motions which are the fruits of these acts of the mind, they are not the next effects of impressions on the body. So that it must be only by the imagination, that Satan has access to the foul, to country with the rest

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tempt and delude it, or suggest any thing to it*. And this seems to be the reason why persons that are under the disease of melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the suggestions and temptations of Satan; that being a disease which peculiarly affects the animal spirits, and is attended with weakness of that part of the body which is the sountain of the animal

* " The imagination is that room of the foul, wherein the devil doth often appear. Indeed (to speak exactly) the devil hath no efficient power over the rational part of a man; he cannot change the will, he cannot alter the heart of a man. So that the utmost he can do, in tempting a man to fin, is by fuafion and fuggestion only. But then how doth the devil do this? Even by working upon the imagination. He observeth the temper, and bodily constitution of a man; and thereupon fuggefts to his fancy, and injects his fiery darts thereinto, by which the mind will come to be wrought upon. The devil then, though he hath no imperious efficacy over thy will, yet because he can thus stir and move thy imagination, and thou being naturally deftitute of grace, canft not withfland these suggestions: hence it is that any fin in thy imagination, though but in the outward works of the foul, yet doth quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this means, do arise those horrible delusions, that are in many erroneous ways of religion; all is because their imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often are these diabolical. delufions of the imagination taken for the gracious opera. tion of God's Spirit?-It is from hence that many have pretended to enthusiasms; -they leave the scr iptures, and wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." Burgess on Original Sin, p. 369.

The great Turretine, speaking on that question, What is the power of angels? says, "As to bodies, there is no doubt but that they can do a great deal upon all forts of elementary and sublunary bodies, to move them locally and variously to agitate them. It is also certain, that they can act upon the external and internal senses, to excite them or to bind them. But as to the rational soul itself, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to God alone, who knows and searches the hearts, and who has them in his hands, does it also appertain to bow and move them whithersoever he will. But angels can act upon the rational soul, only mediately, by imaginations." Theolog. Elench.

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mal spirits, even the brain, which is, as it were, the feat of the phantafy. It is by impressions made on the brain, that any ideas are excited in the mind, by the motion of the animal spirits, or any changes made in the body. The brain being thus weakened and difeased, it is less under the command of the higher faculties of the foul, and yields the more eafily to ex--trinsic impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered motions of the animal spirits; and so the devil has greater advantage to affect the mind, by working on the imagination. And thus Satan, when he casts in those horrid suggestions into the minds of many melancholy persons, in which they have no hand themselves. the does it by exciting imaginary ideas, either of fome dreadful words or fentences, or other horrid outward And when he tempts other persons who are not melancholy, he does it by prefenting to the imagination, in a lively and alluting manner, the objects of their lufts, or by exciting ideas of words, and fo by them exciting thoughts; or by promoting an imagination of outward actions, events, circumstances, &c. Innumerable are the ways by which the mind might be ded on to all kind of evil thoughts, by exciting external ideas in the imagination.

If persons keep no guard at these avenues of Satan, by which he has access to the soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite him, because he appears as an angel of light, and counterseits the illuminations and graces of the Spirit of God, by inward whispers, and immediate suggestions of sacts and events, pleasant voices, beautiful images, and other impressions on the imagination. There are many who are deluded by such things, and are listed up with them, and seek after them, that have a continued course of them, and can have them almost when they will; and respecially when their pride and vain-glory has most occasion for them, to make a shew of them before com-

pany. It is with them, fomething as it is with those who are professors of the art of telling where lost things are to be found, by impressions made on their imaginations; they laying themselves open to the devil, he is always at hand to give them the desired impression.

Before I finish what I would fay on this head of imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual light, and affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent mifunderstanding of what has been faid) defire it may be observed, that I am far from determining, that no affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary ideas. Such is the nature of man, that he can fcarcely think of any thing intenfely, without some kind of outward ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the course of a man's thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confuled, and are not what the mind regards. When the mind is much engaged, and the thoughts intense, oftentimes the imagination is more firong, and the outward idea more lively, especially in persons of some constitutions of body. But there is a great difference between these two things, viz. lively imaginations arifing from strong affections, and ftrong affections arising from lively ima-The former may be, and doubtless often is, in case of truly gracious affections. The affections do not arise from the imagination, nor have any dependence upon it; but, on the contrary, the imagination is only the accidental effect, or consequent of the affection, through the infirmity of human nature. But when the latter is the case, as it often is, that the affection arises from the imagination, and is built upon it, as its foundation, instead of a spiritual illumination or discovery, then is the affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the drift of what has been now faid, of impressions on the imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another mark of gracious affections.

V. Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of

the reality and certainty of divine things.

This feems to be implied in the text that was laid as the foundation of this discourse, 'Whom having not feen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full

of glory.'

All those who are truly gracious persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual conviction of the truth of the great things of the gospel; I mean, that they no longer halt between two opinions; the great doctrines of the gospel cease to be any longer doubtful things, or matters of opinion, which, though probable, are yet difputable; but with them, they are points fettled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their all upon their truth. Their conviction is an effectual conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible things of the gospel, have the influence of real and certain things upon them; they have the weight and power of realthings in their hearts; and accordingly mile in their affections, and govern them through the course of their lives. With respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and the great things he has revealed concerning himself, and his Father, and another world, they have not only a predominating opinion that these things are true, and so yield their assent, as they do in many other matters of doubtful fpeculalatin; but they fee that it is really fo; their eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal purposes and designs, concerning fallen man, and the glorious and everlasting things prepared for the saints in another world, they fee that they are so indeed; and therefore these things are of great weight with them, and have a mighty power upon their hearts, and influence over their practice, in some measure answerable totheir infinite importance.

That all true Christians have such a kind of conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, is abun-

dantly manifest from the holy scriptures. I will mention a few places of many; Matth. xvi. 15. 16. 172 But whom fay ye that I am? Simon Peter answered. and faid, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto bim, Blessed are thou, Simon Barjona :- my father which is in heaven hath revealed it unto thee. John vi. 68. 69. 'Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we be-· lieve and are fure that thou art that Christ, the Sonof the living God. John xvii. 6. 7. 8. I have ma-" nifested thy name unto the men which thou gavestme out of the world. Now they have known that; all things whatfoever thou hast given me, are of thee. · For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have * known furely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst fend me. Acts viii. 37. If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayst. ' 2 Cor. iv. 11. 12. 13. 14. We which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus sake. Death worketh in us -- We having the spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore. have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing, that he which raifed up the Lord Jesus, fhall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Together with ver. 16. For which cause. we faint not. And ver. 18. While we look not at the things which are feen, &c. And chap. v. 1. For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernaclewere dissolved, we have a building of God .- And ver. 6. 7. 8. The efere we are always confident, ' knowing that whilft we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by fight. We are confident, I fay, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. 2 Tim. i. 12. For the which cause I also · fuffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am per-· suaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Heb. iii. 6. Whose house are we, if we hold fast the considence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Heb. xi. 1.
Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; together with that whose chapter. I John iv. 13. 14. 1. 16. Hereby

know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have feen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the

Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that I Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the

love that God hath to us. Chap. v. 4. 5. For whatfoever is born of God, overcometh the world;

and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world,

but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Therefore truly gracious affections are attended with fuch a kind of conviction and perfuation of the truth of the things of the gospel, and fight of their evidence and

reality; as these and other scriptures speak of.

There are many religious affections, which are not attended with such a conviction of the judgment. There are many apprehenfions and ideas which fome have, that they call divine discoveries; which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while they may feem to be more perfuaded of the truth of the things of religion than they used to be, and may yield a forward affent, like many of Christ's hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual conviction; nor is there any great abiding change in them, in this respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great things of the gospel, now these things, with regard to reality and certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another view than they used to do. There are many persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious affections, and think they have been converted, they do not go about the world any more convinced of the truth of the goffel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remark. Y.3.

able alteration: they are not men who live under the influence and power of a realizing conviction of the infinite and eternal things which the gospel reveals; if they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their affections are not attended with a thorough conviction of the mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a show and noise they make, it is like the blaze of tow, or crackling of thorns, or like the forward flourishing blade on stony ground, that has no root, nor deepness of earth

to maintain its life.

Some perfons, under high affections, and a confident persuasion of their good estate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a feeing the truth of the word of God, and which is very far from it, after this manner; they have some text of scripture coming to their minds, in a sudden and extraordinary manner, immediately declaring unto them (as they suppose) that their fins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will fave them; and it may be have a chain of scriptures coming one after another, to the same purpose; and they are convinced that it is truth; i. e. they are confident that it is certainly fo, that their fins are forgiven, and God does love them, &c .- ; they fay they know it is so; and when the words of scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this meaning they are ready to cry out, Truth, truth! it is certainly fo! the word of God is true! And this they call a feeing the truth of the word of God. Whereas the whole of their faith amounts to no more, than only a strong confidence of their own good estate, and so a confidence that these words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good estate: when indeed (as was shown before) there is no scripture which declares that any perion is in a good estate directly, or any other way than by consequence. So that this, inflead of being a real fight of the truth of the word of God, is a fight of nothing but a phantom, and is all over a delusion. Truly to see the truth of the word of

God, is to see the truth of the gospel; which is the glorious doctrine the word of God contains, concerning God, and Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the world of glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a revelation that such and such particular persons are true Christians, and shall go to heaven. Therefore those affections which arise from no other persuasion of the truth of the word of God than this, arise from delusion, and not true conviction; and consequently are them-felves delusive and vain.

But if the religious affections that persons have, do indeed arise from a strong persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion: their affections are not the better. unless their persuasion be a reasonable persuasion or conviction. By a reasonable conviction, I mean a conviction founded on real evidence, or upon that which is a good reason, or just ground of conviction. Men may have a strong persuasion that the Christian religion is true, when their perfuafion is not at all built on evidence, but altogether on education, and the opinion of others; as man y Mahometans are strongly perfuaded of the truth of the Mahometan religion, because their fathers, and neighbours, and nation believe it. That belief of the truth of the Christian religion, which is built on the very fame grounds with Mahometan's belief of the Mahometan religion, is the fame fort of belief. And though the thing believed happens to be better, yet that does not make the belief itself to be of a better fort; for though the thing believed happens to be true, yet the belief of it is not owing to this truth, but to education. So that as the conviction is no better than the Mahometan's conviction; so the affections that flow from it, are no better, in themselves, than the religious affections of Mahometans.

But if that belief of Christian doctrines, which perfons affections arise from, be not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments which are offered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that

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their affections are truly gracious: for in order to that, it is requifite, not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a reasonable, but also a spiritual belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men do yield a kind of affent of their judgments to the truth of the Christian religion, from the rational proofs or arguments that are offered toevince it. Indas, without doubt, thought Jesus to be the Messiah, from the things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a devil. So in John ii. 23. 24. 27. we read of many that believed in Christ's name, when they faw the miracles that he did; whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So Simon the forcerer believed, when he beheld the miracles and figns which were done; but yet remained in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13. 23. And if there is fuch a belief. or affent of the judgment in some natural men, none candoubt but that religious affections may arise from that affent or belief; as we read of fome who believed for a while, that were greatly affected, and anon with joy received the word.

It is evident that there is fuch a thing as a spiritual belief or conviction of the truth of the things of the gospel, or a belief that is peculiar to those who are spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy communications, and dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that the conviction they have, does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its concomitants, in that it is accompanied with a good works; but the belief itself is diverse, the affent and conviction of the judgment is of a kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and that which natural men are wholly deflitute of. This is evident by the fcripture, if any thing at all is fo; John xvii. 8. They have believed that thou didft fend me. Tit. i. 1. According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowe ledging of the truth which is after godlinefs. John xvi. 27. The Father himself loveth you, because yehave

have loved me, and have believed that I came outfrom God. I John iv. 15. Whosever shall confess

that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him,

and he in God! Chap. v. P. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. Ver. 10.

"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the wit-

nefs in himfelf.

What a spiritual conviction of the judgment is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been faid already, under the former head of a spiritual under-The conviction of the judgment arises from the illumination of the understanding; the passing of a right judgment on things, depends on an having a right apprehension or idea of things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual conviction of the truth of the great. things of the gospel, is such a conviction, as arises from having a spiritual view or apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the seripture, which often represents, that a faving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the mind, to have right apprehensions of the nature of those things, and so as it were unveiling things, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them and feethem as they are. Luke x. 21. 22. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and ' prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : even lo, Father, for fo it seemed good in thy fight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. John vi. 40. And this is the will of him that fent me, that every one which feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life. Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual fight of Christ. And John xvii. 6. 7. 8. 1 have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest " me out of the world.—Now they have known that 6 211

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all things whatfoever thou haft given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou e gavest me; and they have received them, and have 'known furely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst fend me.' Where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension and view of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of od, and that Christ himself was of him, and was fent by him. Matth. xvi. 16. 17. Simon Peter faid; thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and faid unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. I John v. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. Gal. i. 14. 15. 16. Being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleafed God, who feparated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.'

If it be so, that that is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the golpel, which arises from a spiritual understanding of those things; I have shown already what that is, viz. a sense and tafte of the divine, fupreme, and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind spiritually convinced of the divinity and truth of the great things of the gospel, when that conviction ariles, either directly or remotely, from fuch a fense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from things that have been already faid: and for this the scripture is very plain and express: 2 Cor. iv. 3. to 6. 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

fus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus fake. For God, who commanded the slight to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this, but we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Nothing can be more evident, than that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of, by the appostle, as arising from the mind's being enlightened to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits.

This view or fense of the divine glory, and unparallelled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity, two ways; directly, and more indirectly, and remotely. 1. A view of this divine glory directly, convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this su-

pernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgment thus directly convinced and affured of the divinity of the things of the gospel, by a clear view of their divine glory, has a reasonable conviction; his belief and affurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is in itself, real evidence of their divinity, and the most direct and strong evidence. He that truly fees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity intuitively: he not only argues that they are divine, but he fees that they are divine; he fees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists, for in this glory, which is fo vally and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, does mainly confir the true notion of divinity. God is God, and diffinguished from all other beings, and exalted

alted above them, chiefly by his divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty. They therefore that fee the stamp of this glory in divine things, they fee divinity in them, they fee God in them, and To fee them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest idea of divinity does confift. Thus a foul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but by one step, and that is its

divine glory.

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It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible, that there should be an excellency in divine things, which is fo transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other things. that if it were feen, would evidently diffinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that things that are divine, that appertain to the Supreme Being, are vaftly different from things that are human: that there is a God-like, high, and glorious excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the things which are of men, that the difference is ineffable; and therefore fuch, as, if feen, will have a most convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are what they are, viz. divine. Doubtless there is that glory and excellency in the divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other beings, that if it were feen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny, that it is possible for God to give manifestations of this distinguishing excellency, in things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are natural excellencies, that are very evidently diffinguishing of the subjects or authors, to any one who beholds them. How vastly is the speech of an understanding man different from that of a little ·child!

child! And how greatly distinguished is the speech of fome men of great genius, as Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison, and others, from that of many other understanding men! There are no limits to be fet to the degrees of manifestation of mental excellency, that there may be in speech. But the appearances of the natural perfections of God, in the manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the appearances of those excellencies of worms of the dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with mankind, and their works, by viewing the fun, may know it is no human work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the end of the world, in the glory of his Father, it will be with fuch ineffable appearances of divinity, as will leave no doubt to the inhabitants of the world, even the most obstinate infidels, that he who appears is a divine person. But above all, do the manifestations of the moral and spiritual glory of the divine Being, (which is the proper beauty of the divinity), bring their own evidence, and tend to assure the heart. Thus the disciples were asfured that Jesus was the Son of God, "for they beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John i. 14. When Christ appeared in the glory of his transfiguration to his disciples, with that outward glory to their bodily eyes, which was a fweet and admirable fymbol and femblance of his spiritual glory, together with his spiritual glory itself, manifested to their minds; the manifestation of glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good reason, assure them of his divinity; as appears by what one of them, viz. the apostle Peter, says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16. 17. 18. 'For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jefus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty: for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excel-· lent 000

lent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from hea-

wen we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. The apostle calls that mount, the holy mount, because the manifestations of Christ which were there made to their minds, and which their minds were especially impressed and ravished with, was the glory of his holiness, or the beauty of his moral excellency; or, as another of these disciples, who saw it, expresses it,

his glory, as full of grace and truth.'

Now this distinguishing glory of the divine Being has its brightest appearance and manifestation, in the things proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, the doctrines there taught, the word there fpoken, and the divine counfels, acts and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential manifestation of divine glory in the gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it: what should hinder but that it may be feen? It is no argument that it cannot be feen, that some do not fee it; though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. If there be fuch ineffable, distinguishing, evidential excellencies in the gospel, it is reasonable to Suppose, that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special influence and enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon force of mind to differn the diffinguishing excellencies of the works of authors of great genius: those things in Milton, which to mean judges appear tafteless and imperfections, are his inimitable excellencies in the eyes of those who are of greater discerning and better taste. And if there be a book, which God is the author of, it is most reasonable to suppose, that the distinguishing glories of his word are of fuch a kind, as that the fin and corruption of men's hearts, which alove all things alienates men from the Deity, and makes the heart dull

and stupid to any sense or taste of those things wherein the moral glory of the divine persections consists; I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blindmen from discerning the beauties of such a book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy taste, to-discern and relish divine beauties.

This fense of the spiritual excellency and beauty of divine things, does also tend directly to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, as there are very many of the most important things declared in the gospel, that are hid from the eyes of natural men, the truth of which does in effect confist in this excellency, or does fo immediately depend upon it and result from it, that in this excellency's being feen, the truth of those. things is feen. As foon as ever the eyes are opened to behold the holy beauty and amiableness that is in divine things, a multitude of most important doctrines of the gospel that depend upon it, (which all appearstrange and dark to natural men), are at once seen to be true. As for instance, hereby appears the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exaseeding evil of fin; for the fame eye that discerns the" transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding octioniness of fin: the fame talke which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitternels of moral evil: And by this means a man fees his own finfulness and loathsomeness; for he has now? a sense to discern objects of this nature; and so sees the truth of what the word of God declares concerning the exceeding finfulness of mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful pollution of his heart, and the desperate depravity of his nature, in a new manner; for his foul has now a fense given it to feet the pain of fuch a discase; and this shows him the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the corruption of man's nature, his original fin, and the ruinous undone condition man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty power of God to renew Z 2:

his heart, and change his nature. Men by feeing the true excellency of holiness, do see the glory of all those things, which both reason and scripture shew to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown, that the glory of them depend on this: and hereby they fee the truth of all that the scripture declares concerning God's glorious excellency and majesty, his being the fountain of all good, the only happiness of the creature, &c. And this again shews the mind the truth of what the fcripture teaches concerning the evil of fin against fo glorious a God; and also the truth of what it teaches concerning ha's just defert of that dreadful punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the impossibility of our offering any fatisfaction, or sufficient atonement for that which is fo infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shews the truth of what the scripture reveals concerning the necessity of a Saviour, to offer an atonement of infinite value for fin. And this fense of spirisual beauty that has been spoken of, enables the foul to see the glory of those things which the gospel reveals concerning the person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding beauty and dignity of his person, appearing in what the gospel exhibits of his word, works, acts, and life: and this apprehension of the superlative dig. nity of his person, shews the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the value of his blood and righteoutness, and so the infinite excellency of that offering he has made to God for us, and so its sufficiency to atone for our fins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the way of falvation by Christ; thus the foul fees the fitness and suitableness of this way of falvation, the admirable wisdom of the contrivance, and the perfect answerableness of the provision that the gospel exhibits, (as made for us); to our necessities. A sense of true divine beauty being given to the foul, the foul difcerns the beauty of every part of the gospel-scheme. This also shews the foul the truth of what the word of God declares concerning man's chief happiness, as consisting in holy exercises and enjoyments.

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enjoymen's. This shews the truth of what the gospel declares concerning the unspeakable glory of the heavenly state. And what the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the writings of the aposses declare concerning the glory of the Messah's kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the scripture teaches concerning the reasons and grounds of our duty. The truth of all these things revealed in the scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the soul, only by imparting that spiritual taste of divine beauty, which has been spoken of; they being hidden things to the soul before:

And besides all this; the truth of all those things which the scripture says about experimental religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the soul, that one who knew the heart of man, better than we know our own hearts, and perfectly knew the nature of virtue and holiness, was the author of the scriptures. And the opening to view, with such clearness, such a world of wonderful and glorious truth in the gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the view of a natural eye, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible influence on the soul, to persuade of the divinity of the gospel.

Unless men may come to a reasonable solid persuasion and conviction of the truth of the gospel, by the internal evidences of it, in the way that has been spoken,
viz, by a sight of its glory; it is impossible that those
who are illiterate, and unacquainted with history,
should have any thorough and effectual conviction of it
at all. They may without this, see a great deal of probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give
much credit to what learned men and historians tell
them; and they may tell them so much, that it may
look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian religion is true; and so much that they would
be very unreasonable not to entertain this opinion. But
to have a conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring,

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as to be sufficient to induce them, with boldness to fell all, confidently and fearlefsly to run the venture of the loss of all things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long-continued torments, and to trample the world under foot, and count all things but dung for Christ; the evidence they can have from history, cannot be fufficient. It is impossible that men, who have not something of a general view of the historical world, or the feries of history from age to age, should come at the force of arguments for the truth of Christianity, drawn from history, to that degree, as effectually to induce them toventure their all upon it. After all that learned men have faid to them, there will remain innumerable doubts on their minds; they will be ready, when pinched with some great trial of their faith, to fay, " How do I know. this, or that? How do I know when these histories. were written? Learned men tell me these bistories were so and so attested in the day of them; but how do I know that there were fuch attestations then? They tell me there is equal reason to believe these facts, as any whatfoever that are related at fuch a difrance; but how do I know that other facts which are related of those ages, ever were? Those who have not fomething of a general view of the feries of historical events, and of the state of mankind from age to age, cannot fee the clear evidence from history, of the truth of facts, in distant ages; but there will endlefs doubts and scruples remain.

But the gospel was not given only for learned men.
There are at least nineteen in twenty, if not ninety-nine in an hundred, of those for whom the scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual conviction of the divine authority of the scriptures, by fach arguments as learned men make use of. If men who have been brought up in heathenism, must wait for a clear and certain conviction of the truth of Christianity, until they have learning and acquaintance with the histories of politer nations, enough to see clearly the force of such kind of arguments; it will make the evi-

dence.

dence of the gospel to them immensely cumbersome, and will render the propagation of the gospel among them infinitely disficult. Miserable is the condition of the Houssatunnuck Indians, and others, who have lately manifested a desire to be instructed in Christianity, if they can come at no evidence of the truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in

any other way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided . for his people no more than probable evidences of the truth of the gospel. He has with great care, abundant ly provided, and given them, the most convincing, affuring, fatisfying and manifold evidence of his faithfulness in the covenant of grace; and as David says, made a covenant, ordered in all things and fure." Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same time, he would not fail of ordering the matter for that there. should not be wanting, as great, and clear evidence, that this is his covenant, and that these promises are his promifes; or, which is the fame thing, that the Christian religion is true, and that the gospel is his word. Otherwife in vain are those great affurances he has given of his faithfulness in his covenant, by confirming it with his oath, and fo variously establishing it by feals and pledges. For the evidence that it is his covenant, is properly the foundation on which all the force and effect of those other assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is fome fort of evidence which God has given, that this covenant, and these promises are his, beyond all mere probability; that there are fome grounds of affurance of it held forth, which; if we are not blind to them, tend to give an higher perfuation, than any arguing from history, human tradition, &c. which the illiterate and unacquainted with history are capable of; yea, that which is good ground of the highest and most perfect affurance, that mankind have in any case whatsoever, agreeable to those high expressions which the apostle uses, Heb. x. 22. Let us draw near in full affurance of faith. And Col. ii. 2. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full affurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest evidence of those things which are greatest, and the truth of which is of greatest importance to us: and that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect assurance of. But it is certain, that such an assurance is not to be attained by the greater part of them who live under the gospel, by arguments setched from ancient traditions, histories, and monuments.

And if we come to fact and experience, there is not the least reason to suppose, that one in an hundred of those who have been fincere Christians, and have had a heart to fell all for Christ, have come by their conviction of the truth of the gospel this way. If we read over the histories of the many thousands that died martyrs for Christ, fince the beginning of the Reformation, and have chearfully undergone extreme tortures in a : confidence of the truth of the gofpel, and confider their circumstances and advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their affured perfuation this way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonable to receive so full and strong an affurance, from fuch arguments! Many of them were: weak women and children, and the greater part of them. illiterate persons, many of whom had been brought up in populh ignorance and darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in times wherein those arguments for the truth of Christianity from antiquity and biftory, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these arguments have been fet in a clear and convincing light, even by learned men themselves: and fince it has been done, there never were fewer thorough believers among those who have been educated in the true religion; infidelity never prevailed so much, in any age, as in this, whereis these arguments are handled to the greatest advan-

The true martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in opinion that the gospel of Christ is true, but those that have feen the truth of its as the very name of martyrs or witnesses (by which they are called in scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called witnesses of the truth of any thing, who only declare they are very much of opinion that fuch a thing is true. Those only are proper witnesses, who can, and do testify that they have feen the truth of the thing they affert; John iii. 11. We speak that we do "know, and tellify that we have feen. John i. 34. · And I faw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. 1 John iv. 14. And we have feen and do teflify, that the Father fent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, Acts xxii. 14. 15. The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and fee that just one, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men, of what thou halt feen and heard. But the true martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his witnesses; and all the faints, who by their holy practice under great trials, declare that faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not feen, are called witnesses, Heb. xi. 1. and xii. 1. because by their profession and practice, they declare their assurance of the truth and divinity of the gospel, having had the eyes of their minds enlightened to fee divinity in the gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, inestably excellent, and truly divine glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: so that they may truly be faid to have feen God in it, and to have feen that it is indeed divine; and so can speak in the style of witnesses; and not only fay, that they think the gospel is divine, but fay, that it is divine, giving it in as their testimony, because they have seen it to be fo. Doubtless Peter, James, and John, after they had feen that excellent glory of Christ in the mount

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mount, would have been ready, when they came down to speak in the language of witnesses, and to say posicively that Jesus is the Son of God; as Peter says, they were eye-witnesses, 2 Pet. i. 16. And so all nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his glory at the day of judgment; though what will be univerfally feen, will be only his natural glory, and not his moral and spiritual glory, which is much more diffinguishing. But yet it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual fight of the divine glory of the gospel, there is a great variety of degrees of strength of faith, as there is a vast variety of the degrees of clearness of views of this glory: but there is no true and faving faith, or spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the truth of the gospel, that has nothing in it, of this manifestation of its internal evidence, in some degree. The gospel of the bleffed God does not go abroad a-begging for its evidence, so much as some think; it has it's highest and most proper evidence in itfelf. Though great use may be made of external arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized. and valued; for they may be greatly ferviceable to awaken unbelievers, and bring them to ferious confideration, and to confirm the faith of true faints; yea, they may be in some respects subservient to the begetting of a. faving faith in men. Though what was faid before remains true, that there is no spiritual conviction of the judgment, but what arises from an apprehension of the spiritual beauty and glory of divine things; for, as has been observed, this apprehension or view has a tendency to convince the mind of the truth of the gospel, two ways, either directly or indirectly. Having therefore. already observed how it does this directly, I proceed

2. To observe how a view of this divine glory does convince the mind of the truth of Christianity, more indicately.

First, It doth so, as the prejudices of the heart against the truth of divine things are hereby removed, so that

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the mind thereby lies open to the force of the reasons which are offered. The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth. and causes them to lose their force upon the mind; but when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys that enmity. and removes the prejudices, and fanctifies the reason. and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast difference, as to the force that arguments have to convince the mind. Hence was the very different effect, which Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples. from what they had to convince the Scribes and Pharifees: not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified. and those blinding prejudices, which the Scribes and Pharifees were under, were removed by the fenfe they had of the excellency of Christ and his doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the hindrances of reafon, but politively helps reason. It makes even the
speculative notions more lively. It affists and engages
the attention of the mind to that kind of objects which
causes it to have a clearer view of them, and more
clearly to see their mutual relations. The ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this
means have a light cast upon them, and are impressed
with greater strength, so that the mind can better judge
of them; as he that beholds the objects on the sace of
the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them,
is under greater advantage to discern them, in their true
forms, and mutual relations, and to see the evidences
of divine wisdom and skill in their contrivance, than he
that sees them in a dim star-light, or twilight.

What has been faid, may serve in some measure to shew the nature of a spiritual conviction of the judgment of the truth and reality of divine things; and so to distinguish truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a

conviction of the judgment.

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But before I dismiss this head, it will be needful to observe the ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this matter; and take notice of several things, that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving belief of the truth of the things of religion, which are in-

deed very diverse from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and fentible apprehention of the things of religion, with respect to what is natural in them, such as natural men have who are under awakenings and common illuminations, will give some degree of conviction of the truth of divine things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they fee the manifestations there are, in the revelation made in the holy scriptures, and things exhibited in that revelation, of the natural perfections of God; fuch as his greatness, power, and awful majesty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there are of God's greatness and majesty in his word and works, which they have a great sense of, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that these are indeed the word and works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively apprehension of the greatness of God, which natural men may have, tends to make them fenfible of the great guilt, which fin against fuch a God brings, and the dreadfulness of his wrath for fin. And this tends to cause them more eafily and fully to believe the revelation the scripture makes of another world, and of the extreme milery it threatens, there to be inflicted on finners. And so from that fense of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is fometimes given in com. mon illuminations, men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. These things persons may have, and yet have no fense of the beauty and amiableness of the moral and holy excellency that is in the

things of religion; and therefore no spiritual conviction of their truth. But yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken for saving convictions, and the affections

flowing from them, for faving affections.

2. The extraordinary impressions which are made on the imaginations of fome perfons, in the visions and immediate strong impulses and suggestions that they have, as though they faw fights, and had words fpoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong persuafion of the truth of invisible things. Though the general tendency of such things, in their final iffue, is to draw men off from the word of God, and to cause them to reject the gospel, and to establish unbelief and atheilm; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are revealed in the scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delufion, and fo nothing worth. As for instance; if a person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings, from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced: and he may also be confident, that this is Christ whom he faw and heard speaking: and this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he faw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, &c .- In the same manner, as the lying miracles of the papifts, may for the present, beget in the minds of the ignorant deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testa-Thus when the images of Christ, in Popish churches, are on fome extraordinary occasions, made by priestcraft to appear to the people as if they wept, Aa and

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and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and fuch words; the people may be verily perfuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and fufferings, and refurrection, and afcension, and present government of the world is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of ocular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present; though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote atheism. Even the intercourse which Satan has with witches, and their often experiencing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the Sadducees. The general tendency of Satan's influence 'is delufion: but yet he may mix fome truth with his lies, that his lies may not be fo eafily difcovered.

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impressions on their imagination, in the manner which has been now spoken of. They say they know that there is a God, for they have feen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have feen him in his glory; they know that Christ died for finners, for they have feen him hanging on the crofs, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have feen the mifery of the damned fouls in hell, and the glory of faints and angels in heaven, (meaning some external representations, strongly impressed on their imagination); they know that the scriptures are the word of God, and that fuch and fuch promifes in particular are his word, for they have heard him speak them to them, they came to their minds fuddenly and immediately from God, thout their having any hand it.

3. Persons may seem to have their be'ief of the truth

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of the things of religion greatly increased, when the foundation of it is only a persuasion they have received of their interest in them. They first, by some means or other, take up a confidence, that if there be a Christ in heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favour of the truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all these things belong to them; and hence eafily become confident that they are true; they look upon it to be greatly for their interest that they should It is very obvious what a strong influence men's interest and inclinations have on their judgments. While a natural man thinks, that if there be a heaven and hell; the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly perfuaded that there is a heaven or hell: but when he comes to be perfuaded, that hell belongs only to other folks, and not to him, then he can eafily allow the reality of hell, and cry out of others senselessines and sottishness in neglecting means of escape from it: and being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promifed heaven to him, he may feem strong in the faith of its reality, and may have: a great zeal against that infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another distinguishing sign of gra-

cious affections.

VI. Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation.

Evangelical humiliation is a fense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odi-

oufness, with an answerable frame of heart.

There is a distinction to be made between a legal and evangelical humiliation. The former is what men may be the subjects of, while they are yet in a state of nature, and have no gracious affection; the latter is peculiar to true saints: the former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural principles, and especially natural conscience; the latter is from the special influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles:

ples: the former is from the mind's being affifted to a greater fense of the things of religion, as to their natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, terrible majesty, &c. which were manifested to the congregation of Ifrael, in giving the law at mount Sinai; the latter is from a fense of the transcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities: in the former, a fense of the awful greatness, and natural perfections of God, and of the strictness of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding finful, and guilty, and exposed to the wrath of God, as it will wicked men and devils at the day of judgment; but they do not see their own odiousness on the account of fin; they do not fee the hateful nature of fin; a fense of this is given in evangelical humiliation, by a discovery of the beauty of God's holiness and moral perfection. In a legal humiliation, men are made fensible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly infufficient to help themselves; as wicked men will be at the day of judgment: but they have not an answerable frame of heart, confisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone; this disposition is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God's holy beauty: in a legal humiliation, the conscience is convinced; as the consciences of all will be most perfectly at the day of judgment; but because there is no spiritual understanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered; this is done only in evangelical humiliation. In legal humiliation, men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: in the former, they are subdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no spiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humi-

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liation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Christian grace does very much confift. Legal humiliation is useful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requifite in order to spiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no humility; as the wicked at the day of judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteousness, but are altogether sinful, and exceeding guilty, and justly exposed to eternal damnation, and be fully fensible of their own helplessness, without the least mortification of the pride of their hearts: but the essence of evangelical humiliation confifts in fuch humility, as becomes a creature, in itself exceeding finful, under a dispensation of grace; confifting in a mean efteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a disposition to exalt himself, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the gospel, and every thing appertaining to the new covenant, and all God's difpenfations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and how high soever their religious affections may be; Hab. ii. 4. ' Behold, his foul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just ' shall live by his faith;' i. e. he shall live by his faith on God's righteousness and grace, and not his own goodness and excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar respect to in his saints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it; Pfal. xxxiv. 18. 'The Lord is night unto them that are of a broken heart, and faveth such ' as be of a contrite spirit. Psal. li. 17. The facri-"fices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Pfal. cxxxviii. 6. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly. Prov. iii. 34. He giveth grace unto the lowly. If. lvii. 15. Thus faith the Aa3 high.

high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. If. lxvi. 1. 2. Thus faith ' the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is " my footstool:-but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Micah vi. 8. He hath shewed thee, O ' man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love " mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Matth. v. 3. Bleffed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God. Matth. xviii. 3. 4. Verily I fay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the fame is greatest in the king-' dom of heaven. Mark x. 15. Verily I fay unto you, ' who foever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a ' little child, he shall not enter therein.' The centurion, that we have an account of, Luke vii. acknowledged that he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his roof, and that he was not worthy to come to him. See the manner of the woman's coming to Christ, that was a finner, Luke vii. 37. &c. 'And behold, a woman in the city, which was a finner, when she knew that Fesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with ' tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.' She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman, (I Cor. xi. 15.) too good to wipe the feer of Christ withal. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and says to her, 'thy faith hath ' faved thee, go in peace.' The woman of Canaan fubmitted to Christ, in his saying, ' it is not meet to " take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs,' and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a dog; whereupon Christ fays unto her, 'O woman, great 15.

is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt, Matth. xv. 26. 27. 28. The prodigal fon faid, I will arise ' and go to my father, and I will fay unto him, Father, 'I have finned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy fon; make me as one of thy hired fervants, Luke xv. 18. &c. See also Luke xviii. 9. &c. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, &c .- The publican ' standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his ' eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a finner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself, shall be ' abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be ex-' alted. Matth. xxviii. 9. And they came, and held ' him by the feet, and worshipped him. Col. iii. 12. · Put ye on, as the elect of God,—humbleness of mind. ' Ezek. xx. 41. 43. I will accept you with your ' fweet favour, when I bring you out from the people, 6 &c .- And there shall ye remember your ways, and 'all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye ' shall lothe yourselves in your own fight, for all your evils that ye have committed. Chap. xxxvi. 26. 27. '31. A new heart also will I give unto you,—and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk ' in my statutes, &c .- Then shall ye remember your ' own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your ' iniquities, and for your abominations. Chap. xvi. 63. 'That thou mayst remember and be confounded, and e never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou halt done, faith the Lord. Job xlii. 6. I abhor myfelf, and repent in dust and ashes.'

As we would therefore make the holy scriptures our rule, in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and state; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one

of the most effential things pertaining to true Christianity +. This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of felf-denial. That duty confifts in two things, viz. first, In a man's denying his worldly incumations, and in forfaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and, fecondly, In denying his natural felfexaltation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely and from his very heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christan doth in evangelical humiliation. And this latter is the greatest and most difficult part of felf-denial: although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many Anchorites and Recluses have abandoned (though without any true mortification), the wealth, and pleasures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one lust to feed another, fold a bealtly lust to pamper a devilish one; and fo were never the better, but their latter end was worse than their beginning; they turned out one black devil. to let in feven white ones, that were worfe than the first, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, felf-exalting disposition is naturally in man; and what he will not do and fuffer to feed and gratify it; and what lengths have been gone in a feeming felf-denial in other respects, by Essenes and Pharisees among the

† Calvin, in his Inflitutions, Book II. chap. 2. § 11. fays, I was always exceedingly pleased with that faying of Chrysostom, 'The foundation of our philosophy is humility;' and yet more pleased with that of Augustine. 'As, fays he, the rhetorician being asked, what was the first thing in the rules of eloquence, he answered, pronunciation; what was the fecond, pronunciation; what was the third, still he answered, pronunciation. So if you shall ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, I would an-Iwer, firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and for ever, humility," be

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Jews, and by Papilts, many fects of heretics, and enthusiasts among professing Christians; and by many Mahometans; and by Pythagorean philosophers, and others among the Heathen; and all to do facrifice to this Moloch of spiritual pride or felf-righteousness; and that they may have fomething wherein to exalt themselves

before God, and above their fellow-creatures.

That humiliation which has been spoken of, is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid shew of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, do grossly fail in. Were it not that this is fo much infifted on in scripture, as a most essential thing in true grace, one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philosophers were truly gracious, in whom was fo bright an appearance of many virtues, and also great illuminations, and inward feryours and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the subjects of divine illapses and heavenly communications *. It is true, that many hypocrites make great pretences

* " Albeit the Pythagoreans were thus famous for Judaic mysterious wisdom, and many moral, as well as natural accomplishments, yet were they not exempted from boasting and pride; which was indeed a vice most epidemic, and as it were congenial, among all the philosophers; but in a more particular manner, among the Pythagoreans. So Hornius Hist. Philosoph. L. 3. chap. 11. The manners of the Pythagoreans were not free from boafting. They were all fuch as abounded in the fense and commendation of their own excellencies, and boafting even almost to the degree of immodesty and impudence, as great Heinsius, ad Horat. has rightly observed. Thus indeed does proud nature delight to walk in the sparks of its own fire. And although many of these old philosophers could, by the ftrength of their own lights and heats, together with some common elevations and raifures of spirit, (peradventure from a more than ordinary, though not special and taving affistance of the Spirit), abandon many groffer vices; yet they were all deeply immerfed in that miferable curled abyls of spiritual pride: so that all their natural, and moral and philosophic attainments, did feed, nourish, strengthen

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pretences to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatfoever which they make a higher profession of. They endeavour to make a great shew of humility in speech and behaviour; but they commonly make bungling work of it, though glorious work in their own eyes. They cannot find out what a humble speech and behaviour is, or how to speak and act to that there may indeed be a favour of Christian humility in what they fay and do: that sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not led by the Spirit, or naturally guided to a behaviour becoming holy humility, by the vigour of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and fuch times, and abounding in very bad expressions which they use about themselves; such as, 'I am the least of all faints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! my heart is worse than the devil! Oh, this cursed heart ' of mine, &c.' Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart that is broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus's feet with her tears, not as ' remembering and being ' confounded, and ever opening their mouth more be-' cause of their shame, when God is pacified,' as the expression is, Ezek. xvi. 63. but with a light air, with **fmiles**

and render most inveterate, this hell-bred pest of their hearts. Yea those of them that seemed most modest, as the Academics, who professed they knew nothing, and the Cynics, who greatly decried, both in words and habits, the pride of others, yet even they abounded in the most notorious and visible pride. So connatural and morally essential to corrupt nature, is this envenomed root, fountain, and plague of spiritual pride; especially where there is any natural, moral, or philosophic excellence to feed the same. Whence, Austin rightly judged all these philosophic virues to be but splendid sins. Gale's Court of the Genles, Part II. B. ii, chap. 10. § 17.

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fmiles in the countenance, or with a pharifaical affectation: and we must believe that they are thus humble, and fee themselves so vile, upon the credit of their say fo; for there is nothing appears in them of any favour . of humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds that they do. There are many that are full of expresfions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright faints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary, or to earry it towards them any otherwife, than as if we looked upon them as some of the chief of There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked hearts, and their great short-comings, and unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should fignify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrennels and unprofitablenels, and falling to much fhort of many others, it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be a danger of a rooted prejudice in them J against such a minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against legal doctrines, legal preaching, and a legal spirit, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A legal spirit is a more subtil thing than they imagine, it is too fubtil for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he is of a legal spirit. A spirit of pride of a man's own righteoufness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodnels whatfoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in Adam before the fall, to be of a legal spirit; because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteouinels.

righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen sinful creature, can be nothing also but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living that is lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glifters in his own eyes, but what trufts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them; however he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the great things God has done for him, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates fomething to himself, as though his experiences were fome dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them fo too; for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true; and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and fo unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glisters as much in God's eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's fight, and recommend him to God: and with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to hell. Poor deluded wretches, who think they look fo gliftering in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, that the most impure beast in Sodom, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to live upon experiences, according to the true notion of it; and not to do as those, who only make use of spiritual experiences, as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

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down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and fet up themselves very much as evangelical perfons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair shew of advancing Christ and the gofpel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the gospel-way of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure, humble?

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There is a pretended great humiliation, and being dead to the law, and emptied of felf, which is one of the biggest and most elated things in the world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their own hearts, and of being brought fully off from works; whose converfation has favoured most of a felf-righteous spirit of any that ever I had opportunity to observe. And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident

+ " Take not every opinion and doctrine from men or angels, that bears a fair shew of advancing Christ; for they may be but the fruits of evangelical hypocrify and deceit; that being deceived themselves, may deceive others too; Matth. vii. 15. " Beware of them, that come in fheep's cloathing; in the innocency, purity, and meekness of Christ and his people; but inwardly are wolves, proud, cruel, censorious, speaking evil of what they know not. By their fruits you shall know them. Do not think, beloved, that Satan will not feek to fend delufions among us. And do you think these delusions will come out of the popish pack, whose inventions smell above ground here? No, he must come, and will come with more evangelical, fine spun devices. It is a rule observed amongst Jesuits, at this day. if they would conquer religion by fubtilty, never oppose religion with a cross religion; but set it against itself. So oppose the gospel by the gospel. And look, as churches pleading for works, had new invented devised works; so when faith is preached, men will have their new inventions of faith. I speak not this against the doctrine of faith, where it is preached; but am glad of it: not that I would have men content themselves with every form of faith; for I be lieve that most men's faith needs confirming or trying. But I speak to prevent danger on that hand." Shepard's Pa rable, Part I. p. 122.

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confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and listed up to heaven with an high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming bumility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and oftentatious of their humility. This appears in that surface further of pride, among the children of men, that would be called his holiness, even the man of sin, that exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself Servant of servants; and to make a shew of humility, washes the seet of a number

of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, and to be poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is associated about themselves as to his matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behaviour is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much as this of spiritual pride and self righteousness. The subtilty of Satan appears in its height, in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience; he knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it: it was his own sin.—Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtil and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may sperhaps universally and surely) be discovered and dis-

tinguished.

The first thing is this; he that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others. It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly good and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart, d d,

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heart, Luke xviii. 11. 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men.' And If. lxv. 5. ' I am holier than thou.' Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's people, and as it were to take a high feat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7. &c. take the highest room. This they do, by being forward to take upon them the place and business of the chief; to guide, teach, direct, and manage; they are confident that they are guides to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes, Rom. ii. 19. 20.' It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the part of dictators and masters in matters of religion; and fo they implicitly affect to be called of men Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the Pharifees did, Matth. xxiii. 6. 7. i. e. they are yet apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as maiters, in matters of religion *.

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves; Phil. ii. 3. 'In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.' Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them; and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Saviour, Luke xiv. 10. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of Bb 2

* "There be two things wherein it appears that a man has only common gifts, and no inward principle; I. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did, and many a private man thinks himself sit to be a minister." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 181. 182.

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teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with Moses and Jeremiah, (Exod. iii. 11. Jer. i. 6.), though they were such emiment faints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: they are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others, than to dictate to others; Jam. i. 19. Be ye swift to hear, flow to speak.' And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, mafterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak, trembling. Hos. xiii, r. When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Ifrael; but when he offended in Baal, he died.' They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be Subject to others; Jam. iii. 1. 2. Be not many masters. 1 Pet. v. 5. All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. Eph. v. 21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

There are some persons experiences that naturally work that way, to make them think highly of their experiences; and they do often themselves speak of their experiences as very great and extraordinary; they freely fpeak of the great things they have met with. This may be spoken and meant in a good sense. In one sense, every degree of faving mercy is a great thing: it is indeed a thing great, yea, infinitely great, for God to beflow the least crumb of children's bread on such dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a personis that hopes that God has bestowed such mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a great thing that he has met with in this sense. But if by great things which they have experienced, they mean comparatively great spiritual experiences, or great compared with others experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the case; then for a person to say, I have met with great things, is the very fame thing as to fay, I am an eminent faint, and

have more grace than ordinary: for to have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the same thing as to have great grace: there is no true experience, but the exercise of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holinefs. The persons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others should admire them. Indeed they do not call it boafting to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any fign of pride; because they fay, they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they ' are the great things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has shown them, and not make light of it.' But so it was with the Pharisee that Christ tells us of, Luke xviii. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; God, I thank thee, fays he, that I am not as other men *. Their verbally afcribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other faints, does not hinder their forwardness to think so highly of their holiness, being a fure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of an humble spirit, their attainments in religion would not be so apt to shine in their own eyes, nor would they be so much in admiring their own beauty. The Christians that are really the most eminent faints, and therefore have the most excellent experiences, and are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, humble themselves as a little child. Matth. viii.4. because they look on themselves as but · little chdren in grace, and their attainments to be but the attain nents of babes in Christ, and are astonished at, and ashamed of the low degrees of their love, and Bb3

^{*} Calvin, in his Institutions, B. III. chap. xii. § 7. speaking of this Pharisee, observes, "That in his outward confession, he acknowledges that the righteousness that he has is the gift of God: but (says he) because he trusts that he is righteous, he goes away out of the presence of God, unacceptable and odious."

Part III.

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their thankfulness, and their little knowledge of God. Moses when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others as to dazzle their eyes, wist not that his face shone. There are some persons that go by the name of high professors, and some will own themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints, that will shine brightest in heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess themselves to be the least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his †.

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the prefent state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their desormity great. And they that have the most grace and spiritual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. As will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs

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+ Luther, as his words are cited by Rutherford, in his Display of the spiritual Antichrist, p. 143. 144. says thus, So is the life of a Christian, that he that has begun, seems to himself to have nothing; but strives and presses forward, that he may apprehend: Whence Paul fays, I count not myself to have apprehended. For indeed nothing is more pernicious to a believer, than that prefumption, that he has already apprehenced, and has no further need of feeking. Ifence also many fall back, and pine away in spiritual secu-rity and slothfulness. So Bernard says, " To stand still in God's way, is to go back." Wherefore this remains to him that he has begun to be a Christian, to think that he is not yet a Christian, but to seek that he may be a Christian, that he may glory with Paul, " I am not, but I defire to be;" a Christian not yet finished, but only in his beginnings. Therefore he is not a Christian that is a Christian, that is, he that thinks himself a finished Christian, and is not sensible how he falls short. We reach after heaven, but are not in heaven. Wo to him that is wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himself to be so. That man, without doubt, has never so much as begun to be renewed, nor did he ever tafte what it is to be a Christian."

the nature and reason of things, and confiders the things

following.

That grace and holiness is worthy to be called little. that is, little in comparison of what it ought to be. And fo it feems to one that is truly gracious: for fuch an one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his foul ftruggles and reaches after, and it is by that that he effimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious foul, and especially to one eminently gracious, that holiness appears little, which is little of what it should be; little of what he fees infinite reason for. and obligation to. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any beauty or amiableness in him. For the like reason as a hungry man naturally accounts that which is fet before him, but a little food, a small matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in comparison of his appetite. Or as the child of a great prince, that is jealous for the honour of his father, and beholds the respect which men shew him, naturally looks on that honour and respect very little, and not worthy to be regarded. which is nothing in comparison of that which the dignity of his father requires.

But that is the nature of true grace and spirituallight, that it opens to a person's view the infinite reason there is that he should be holy in a high degree. And the more grace he has, the more this is opened to view, the greater sense he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite dignity of the person of Christ, and the boundless length and breadth, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ to sinners. And as grace increases, the field opens more and more to a distant view, until the soul is swallowed up with the vastness of the object, and the person is assonisted to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has so loved man, and how little he does love. And so the more he appre-

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hends, the more the smallness of his grace and love appears strange and wonderful: and therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the littleness of his own grace, he can fearcely believe that fo ftrange a thing happens to other faints: it is amazing to him, that one that is really a child of God, and that has actually received the faving benefits of that unspeakable love of Christ, should love no more: and he is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himself, a strange and exempt instance; for he sees only the outfide of other Christians, but he sees his own inside.

Here the reader may possibly object, that love to God is really increased in proportion as the knowledge of God is increased; and therefore how should an increase of knowledge in a faint make his love appear lefs, in comparison of what is known? To which I answer, that although grace and the love of God in the faints, be answerable to the degree of knowledge or fight of God; yet it is not in proportion to the object feen and known. The foul of a faint, by having fomething of God opened to fight, is convinced of much more than is feen. There is fomething that is feen, that is wonderful; and that fight brings with it a strong conviction of something vastly beyond, that is not immediately seen. So that the foul, at the same time, is astonished at its ignorance, and that it knows fo little, as well as it that loves fo little. And as the foul, in a spiritual view, is convinced of infinitly more in the object, yet beyond fight; fo it is convinced of the capacity of the foul, of knowing vally more, if the clouds and darkness were but removed. Which causes the soul, in the enjoyment of a spiritual view, to complain greatly of spiritual ignorance, and want of love, and long and reach after more knowledge, and more love.

Grace and the love of God in the most eminent faints in this world, is truly very little in comparison of what it ought to be. Because the highest love, that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in comparison of what our

obligations

obligations appear to be, from the joint confideration of these two things; viz. 1. The reason God has given us to love him, in the manifestations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word, and in his works; and particularly in the gospel of his Son, and what he has done for finful man by him. And, 2. The capacity there is in the foul of man, by those intellectual faculties which God has given it, of feeing and understanding these reasons, which God has given us to love him. How small indeed is the love of the most eminent saint on earth, in comparison of what these things jointly considered do require! And this grace tends to convince men of, and especially eminent grace; for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view. And therefore he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others that great height to which his love ought to afcend and he fees better than others, how little a way he has rifen towards that height. And therefore, estimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears aftonishingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent faint, having fuch a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, this shews him, not only the littleness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or fin we have remaining in us. we must take our measure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends: the whole of the distance we are at from that height, is fin: for failing of duty is fin; otherwise our duty is not our duty, and by how much the more we fall short of our duty, so much the more fin have we. Sin is no other than disagreeableness, in a moral agent, to the law or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of fin is to be judged of by the rule: fo much disagreeableness to the rule, so much fin whether it be in defect or excels. Therefore if men, in their love to God, do not come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; because there is more goodness wanting, than is there; and all that is want-

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ing is fin: it is an abominable defect; and appears to to the faints, especially those that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them; that Christ should be loved so, little, and thanked so little for his dying love:

it is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increase of grace has a tendency another way, to cause the saints to think their deformity vally more than their goodness: it not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodnefs, which is indeed the case; but it also tends to cause the deformity that there is in the least fin, or the least degree of corruption, to appear fo great as vally to out? weigh all the beauty there is in their greatest holines; for this also is indeed the case, For the least fin against an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulness or deformity in it; but the highest degree of holiness in a creature, has not an infinite loveliness in it; and therefore the loveliness of it is as nothing; in comparison of the deformity of the least fin. That every fin has infinite deformity and hatefulness in it, is most demonstrably evident; because what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulness of fin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we should be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, fo much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulness of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love and honour any being, is in some proportion to his loveliness and honourableness, or to his worthiness to be loved and honoured by us; which is the fame thing. We are furely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a lefs lovely; and if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him are infinitely great: and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity, and unworthiness. But on the other hand, with respect to our holiness or love to God, there is not an infinite worthinels in that. The fin of the creature against God, is illdeferving and hateful in proportion to the distance there

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is between God and the creature: the greatness of the object, and the meannels and inferiority of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is worthless, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great dearee of superiority increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful: but the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; be. cause the more he is inferior, the less he is worthy of notice; the less he is, the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of fin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it; it is less than a drop to the ocean; for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do things appear to him, in this respect as they are indeed. Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past deformity, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and in the abominable defects of his highest and best affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high and religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them

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without complaints of any hateful evil left in them; (though it may be they cry out much of their past ununworthiness); a fure and certain evidence that their discoveries (as they call them) are darkness and not light. It is datkness that hides men's pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all-searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true, that faving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the positive exercises of it, such as malice, envy, covetoulnels, lasciviousnels, murmuring, Sc. but they bring corruption to light, in that which is privative, viz. that there is no more love, no more humility, no more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful, in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very burdensome, and cause the saints to cry out of their leannels, and odious pride and ingratitude. And what ever politive exercises of corruption at any time arise, and mingle themfelves with eminent actings of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent faints are, and the more they have of the light of heaven in their fouls, the more do they appear to themselves, as the most eminent saints in this world do, to the faints and angels in heaven. How can we rationally suppose the most eminent faints on earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwise, than covered over with the righteousness of Christ, and their deformities swallowed up and hid in the corufcation of the beams of his abundant glory and love? how can we suppose our most ardent love and praises appear to them, that do behold the beauty and glory of God without a vail? how does our highest thankfulness for the dying love of Christ appear to them, who see Christ as he is, who know as they are known, and fee the glory of the person of him that died, and the wonders of his dying love, without any cloud of darkness? and how do they look

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on the deepest reverence and humility, with which worms of the dust on earth approach that infinite Majesty which they behold? do they appear great to them, or so much as worthy of the name of reverence and humility, in those that they see to be at such an infinite distance from that great and holy God, in whose glorious presence they are? The reason why the highest attainments of the saints on earth appear so mean to them, is because they dwell in the light of God's glory, and see God as he is. And it is in this respect with the saints on earth, as it is with the saints in heaven, in proportion as they

are more eminent in grace.

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I would not be understood, that the faints on earth have in all respects the worst opinion of themselves, when they have most of the exercise of grace. In many respects it is otherwise. With respect to the positive exercifes of corruption, they may appear to themselves freest and best when grace is most in exercise, and worst when the actings of grace are lowest. And when they compare themselves with themselves at different times, they may know, when grace is in lively exercise, that it is better with them than it was before, (though before, in the time of it, they did not see so much badness as they fee now); and when afterwards they fink again in the frame of their minds, they may know that they link, and have a new argument of their great remaining corruption, and a rational conviction of a greater vileness than they faw before; and may have more of a fense of guilt, and a kind of legal fense of their finfulness, by far, than when in the lively exercise of grace. But yet it is true, and demonstrable from the forementiond considerations, that the children of God never have so much of a fensible and spiritual conviction of their deformity, and fo great, and quick, and abasing a fense of their present vileness and odiousness, as when they are highest in the exercise of true and pure grace; and never are they fo much disposed to set themselves low among Christians as then. And thus he that is greatest in the kingdom, or most eminent in the church of Christ, is the same

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that humbles himself, as the least infant among them; agreeble to that great saying of Christ, Matth. xviii. 4.

A true faint may know that he has some true grace: and the more grace there is, the more eafily is it known; as was observed and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent faint is eafily fensible that he is an eminent faint, when compared with others.—I will not deny that it is possible, that he that has much grace, and is an eminent faint, may know it. But he will not be apt to know it; it will not be a thing obvious to him: that he is better than others, and has higher experiences and attainments, is not a foremost thought; nor is it that which, from time to time readily offers itself; it is a thing that is not in his way, but lies far out of fight; he must take pains to convince himself of it; there will be need of a great command of reason, and a high degree of strictness and care in arguing, to convince himself. And if he be rationally convinced by a very strick confideration of his own experiences, compared with the great appearances of low degrees of grace in some other faints, it will hardly feem real to him, that he has more grace than they; and he will be apt to lofe the conviction that he has by pains obtained: nor willit feem at all natural to him to act upon that supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible thing, 'That the person who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent faint, much distinguished in Ohriflian experience, in whom this is a first thought, that ' rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certain-'ly mistaken; he is no eminent faint, but under the great prevailings of a proud and felf-righteous spirit.? And if this be habitual with the man, and is statedly the prevailing temper of his mind, he is no faint at all; he has not the least degree of any true Christian experience; fo furely as the word of God is true.

And that fort of experiences that appears to be of that tendency, and is found from time to time to have that effect, to elevate the subject of them with a great conceit of those experiences, is certainly vain and delusive.

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Those supposed discoveries that naturally blow up the person with an admiration of the eminency of his discoveries, and fill him with conceit, that now he has feen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the nature of true spiritual light in them. All true spiritual knowledge is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own ignorance; as is evident by I Cor. viii. 2. 'He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' Agur, when he had a great discovery of God, and sense of the wonderful height of his glory, and of his marvellous works, and cries out of his greatness and incomprehensibleness; at the same time, had the deepest sense of his brutish ignorance, and looked upon himself the most ignorant of all the faints; Prov. xxx. 2. 3. 4. Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wildom, nor have the know-· ledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fifts? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who

For a man to be highly conceited of his spiritual and divine knowledge, is for him to be wise in his own eyes, if any thing is. And therefore it comes under those prohibitions, Prov. iii. 7. 'Be not wise in thine own 'eyes;' Rom. xii. 16. 'Be not wise in your own conceits:' and brings men under that wo, Is. v. 21. 'Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.' Those that are thus wise in their own eyes, are some of the least likely to get good of any in the world. Experience shews the truth of that, Prov. xxvi. 12. 'Seest thou a man wise in his 'own conceit?' there is more hope of a fool than of him.'

hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his

To this some may object, that the psalmist, when we must suppose that he was in a holy frame, speaks of his knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than . C.c. 2.

that of other faints, Pfal, cxix. 99. 100. "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients: because I keep thy precepts."

To this I answer two things:

(1.) There is no restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he shall reveal to a prophet, for the benefit of his church, who is speaking or writing under immediate inspiration. The Spirit of God may reveal to fuch an one, and dictate to him, to declare to others fecret things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him mysteries, that otherwise would be above the reach of his reason; or things in a distant place, that he cannot fee: or future events, that it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarrly revealed to him; fo the Spirit of God might reveal to David this distinguishing benefit he had received, by converfing much with God's testimonies; and use him as his instrument to record it for the benefit of others, to excite them to the like duty, and to use the same means to gain knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural tendency of the ordinary gracious influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that David declares of his distinguishing knowledge under the extraordinary influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine mind by inspiration, and using David as his instrument to write what he pleased for the benefit of his church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural tendency of grace to incline men to curse others, and wish the most dreadful misery to them that can be thought of, because David, under inspiration, often curses others, and prays that fuch mifery may come upon them.

(2.) It is not certain that the knowledge David here speaks of, is spiritual knowledge, wherein holiness does fundamentally consist. But it may be that greater rerevelation which God made to him of the Messiah, and the things of his suture kingdom, and the far more clear

and extensive knowledge that he had of the mysteries and dectrines of the gospel, than others; as a reward for his keeping God's testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the book of Psalms, that David sar exceeded

all that had gone before him.

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Secondly, Another thing that is an infallible fign of spiritual pride, is persons being apt to think highly of their humility. False experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit humility. And it is the very nature of a counterfeit humility, to be highly conceited of itself. Falle religious affections have generally that tendency, . especially when raised to a great height, to make persons think that their humility is great, and accordingly to take much notice of their great attainments in this respect, and admire them. But eminently gracious affections, (I icruple not to fay it) are evermore of a contrary tendency, and have universally a contrary effect in those that have them. They indeed make them very fensible what reason there is that they should be deeply humbled, and cause them earnestly to thirst and long after it; but they make their present humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear small; and their remaining pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The reason why a proud person should be apt to think his humility great, and why a very humble person should think his humility small, may be easily seen, if it be confidered, that it is natural for persons, in judging of the degree of their own humiliation, to take their meafure from that which they esteem their proper height, . or the dignity wherein they properly stand. That may be great humiliation in one, that is no humiliation at all in another; because the degree of honourableness of confiderableness, wherein each does properly stand, is very different. For some great man, to stoop to loose the latchet of the shoes of another great man, his equal, or to wash his feet, would be taken notice of as an act of abasement in him; and he being sensible of his own dignity, would look upon it so himself. But if a poor flave is feen stooping to unloofe the shoes of a great Cc 3 prince.

Part III.

prince, nobody will take any notice of this, as any act of humiliation in him, or token of any great degree of humility: nor would the flave himfelf, unless he be horribly proud, and ridiculously conceited of himself: and if after he had done it, he should, in his talk and behaviour, shew that he thought his abasement great in it, and had his mind much upon it, as an evidence of his being very humble; would not every body cry out upon him, "Who do you think yourfelf to be. " that you should think this that you have done " fuch a deep humiliation?" This would make it plain to a demonstration, that this flave was swollen with a high degree of pride and vanity of mind, as much as if he declared in plain terms, " I think myfelf to be some. "great one." And the matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile, and loathsome worms of the dust, are apt to put such a construction on their acts of abasement before God; and to think it a token of great humility in them, that they, under their affections, can find themselves so willing to acknowledge themfelves to be fo and fo mean and unworthy, and to behavethemselves as those that are so inserior. The very reafon why fuch outward acts, and fuch inward exercises, look like great abasemement in such an one, is because he has a high conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought. of himself more justly, these things would appear nothing to him, and his humility in them worthy of no regard; but would rather be aftonished at his pride, that one fo infinitely despicable and vile is brought nolower before God .- When he fays in his heart, " This is a great act of humiliation; it is certainly a fign of great humility in me, that I should feel thus and do " fo;" his meaning is, " This is great humility for me, for fuch a one as I, that am fo confiderable and wor-" thy." He confiders how low he is now brought, and compares this with the height of dignity on which he in his heart thinks he properly stands, and the distance appears very great, and he calls it all mere humility. and as such admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble,

humble, and really fees his own vileness and leathfomenels before God, the distance appears the other way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper fration, but that he is not come to it; he appears to himfelf yet vaftly above it, he longs to get lower, that he may come to it, but appears at a great distance from it. And this distance hecalls pride. And therefore his pride appears, great to him, and not his humility. For altho? he is brought much lower than he used to be, yet it: does not appear to him worthy of the name of humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a place, which though it be lower. than what he used to assume, is yet vastly higher than what is proper for him. As men would hardly count: it worthy of the name of humility, in a contemptible . flave, that formerly affected to be a prince, to have his spirit so far brought down, as to take the place of a nobleman; when this is still to far above his proper station.

All men in the world, in judging of the degree of their own and others humility, as appearing in any act of theirs, consider two things; viz. the real degree of dignity they stand in; and the degree of abasement, and the relation it bears to that real dignity. Thus the complying with the same low place, or low act, may be an evidence of great humility in one, that evidences but little or no humility in another. But truly humble Christians have so mean an opinion of their own real dignity, that all their self-abasement, when considered with relation to that, and compared to that, appears very small to them. It does not seem to them to be any great humility, or any abasement to be made much of, for such poor, vile, abject creatures as they, to lie at the soot of Ged.

The degree of humility is to be judged of by the degree of abasement, and the degree of the cause for abasement; but he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his humility great, considering the cause.

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The cause why he should be abased appears so great and the abasement of the frame of his heart so greatly thort of it, that he takes much more notice of his pride than his humility. distingent as on har-min on margin

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Every one that has been conversant with souls under: convictions of fin, knows that those who are greatly convinced of fin, are not apt to think themselves greatly convinced. And the reason is this: men judge of the degree of their own convictions of fin by two things jointly confidered : viz. the degree of fense which they have of guilt and pollution, and the degree of cause. they have for fuch a fense, in the degree of their real. finfulness. It is really no argument of any great conviction of fin, for some men to think themselves to be very finful, beyond most others in the world; because they are fo indeed, very plainly and notoriously. . And therefore a far less conviction of sin may incline fuch an one to think fo than another; he must be very blind indeed not to be fensible of it. But he that is truly under great convictions of fin, naturally thinks this to be his case. It appears to him, that the cause he has to be fensible of guilt and pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he afcribes his fenfibleness of this to the greatness of his sin, and not to the greatness of his fensibility. It is natural for one under great convictions, to think himself one of the greatest of sinners in reality, and also that it is so very plainly and evidently; for the greater his convictions are, the more plain and evident it feems to be to him, And therefore it necessarily seems to him so plain and 2 fo eafy to him to fee it, that it may be feen without : much conviction. That man is under great convictions, whose conviction is great in proportion to his sin. But no man that is truly under great convictions, thinks his conviction great in proportion to his fin. For if he does, it is a certain fign that he inwardly thinks his fins small. And if that be the case, that is a certain evidence that his conviction is small. And this, by the way, is the main reason that persons, when under a

work of humiliation, are not fentible of it in the time of it.

And as it is with conviction of fin, just so it is, by parity of reason, with respect to persons conviction or sensibleness of their own meanness and vileness, their own blindness, their own impotence, and all that low sense that a Christian has of himself, in the exercise of evangelical humiliation. So that in a high degree of this, the saints are never disposed to think their sense bleness of their own meanness, filthiness, impotence, &c; to be great; because it never appears great to them,

confidering the cause.

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An eminent faint is not apt to think himself eminent in any thing; all his graces and experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his humility. There is nothing that appertains to Christian experience, and true piety, that is so much out of his sight as his humility. He is a thousand times more quick-sighted to discern his pride than his humility: that he easily discerns, and is apt to take much notice of, but hardly discerns his humility. On the contrary, the deluded hypocrite, that is under the power of spiritual pride, is so blind to nothing as his pride; and so quick-sighted to nothing, as the shews of humility that are in him.

The humble Christian is more apt to find fault with his own pride than with other men's. He is apt to put the best construction on others words and behaviour, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud hypocrite is quick to discern the mote in his brother's eye, in this respect; while he sees nothing of the beam in his own. He is very often much in crying out of others pride, finding fault with others apparel, and way of living; and is affected ten times as much with his neighbour's ring or ribband, as with all-

the filthiness of his own heart.

From the disposition there is in hypocrites to think highly of their humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit humility is forward to put itself forth to view. Those that

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that have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their bumiliations, and to fet them forth in high terms, and to make a great outward shew of humility, in affected looks, gestures, or manner of speech, or meanness of apparel, or some affected fingularity. So it was of old with the false prophets, Zech. xiii. 4.; so it was with the hypocritical Jews, If. Ivii. 5. and fo Christ tells us it was with the Pharifees, Matth. vi. 16. it is contrariwife with true humility; they that have it, are not apt to display their eloquence in setting of it forth, or to speak of the degree of their abasement in strong terms +. It does not affect to shew itself in any singular outward meanne's of apparel, or way of living; agreeable to what is implied in Matth. vi. 17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face. Col. ii. 23. Which things have indeed a hew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body.' Nor is true humility a noify thing; it is not loud and boilterous. The scripture represents it as of a contrary nature. Ahab, when he had a visible humility, a refemblance of true humility, went foftly, I Kings xxi. 27. A penitent, in the exercise of true humiliation, is represented as still and silent, Lam. iii. 28. ' He fitteth alone and keepeth slence, because he hath borne it upon him.' And filence is mentioned as what attends humility; Prov. xxx. 32. If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Thus I have particularly and largely shewn the nature of that true humility that attends holy affections,

† It is an observation of Mr Jones, in his excellent treatise of the canon of the New Testament, that the evangelist Mark, who was the companion of St Peter, and is supposed to have written his gospel under the direction of that apostle, when he mentions Peter's repentance after his denying his Master, does not use such strong terms to set it forth as the other evangelists, he only uses these words, 'When he thought thereon, he wept, Mark xiv. 72.; whereas the other evangelists say thus, 'he went out and wept bitterly, Matth xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

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as it appears in its tendency to cause persons to think meanly of their attainments in religion, as compared with the attainments of others, and particularly of their attainments in humility: and have shewn the contrary tendency of spiritual pride, to dispose persons to think their attainments in these respects to be great. infifted the longer on this matter, because I look upon it as a matter of great importance, as it affords a certain distinction between true and counterfeit humility; and also as this disposition of hypocrites to look on themfelves better than others, is what God has declared to be very hateful to him, ' a smoke in his nose, and a fire that burneth all the day, If. lxv. 5.' It is mentioned as an instance of the pride of the inhabitants of that holy city (as it was called) Jerusalem, that they esteemed themselves far better than the people of Sodom, and so looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and difregarded by them; Ezek. xvi. 56. ' For thy fifter Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of ' thy pride.'

Let not the reader lightly pals over these things in application to himself. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad fign for a person to be apt to think himfelf a better faint than others, there will arise a blinding prejudice in your own favour; and there will probably be need of a great strictness of felf-examination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If on the proposal of the question, you answer, ' No, it seems to me, none are so bad as I,' do not let the matter pais off fo; but examine again, whether or no you do not think yourfelf better than others on this very account, because you imagine you think so meanly of yourself. Have not you an high opinion of this humility? and if you answer again, 'No; I have not an high opinion of my humility; it feems to me I am as proud as the devil; yet examine again, whether felf-conceit do not rife up under this cover; whether on this very account, that you think yourfelf as proud as the devil, you do not

think yourself to be very humble.

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From this opposition that there is between the nature of a true, and of a counterfeit humility, as to the elleem that the subjects of them have of themselves, arises a

manifold contrariety of temper and behaviour.

A truly humble person, having such a mean opinion of his righteousness and holiness, is poor in spirit. For a person to be poor in spirit, is to be in his own sense and apprehension poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an answerable disposition. Therefore a truly humble person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many respects as a poor man. 'The poor useth intreaties, but the rich answereth rough-! ly.' A poor man is not disposed to quick and high refentment when he is among the rich: he is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not stiff and felf-willed; he is patient with hard fare; he expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently; he does not take it heinously that he is overlooked and but little regarded; he is prepared to be in low place; he readily honours his superiors; he takes reproofs quietly; he readily honours others as above him; he eafily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his understanding and judgment; he is not over nice or humourfome, and has his spirit subdued to hard things; he is not affuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian, Humility is (as the great Mastricht expresses it) a kind of holy pufflanimity. 22 10B at

A man that is very poor is a beggar; so is he that is poor in spirit. This is a great difference between those affections that are gracious, and those that are false; under the former, the person continues still a poor beggar at God's gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make men appear to themselves rich, and increased with goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great stock in their own imagination for their subsistence.

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†" This spirit ever keeps a man poor and vile in his own eyes,

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A poor man'is modest in his speech and behaviour; To, and much more, and more certainly and universally, is one that is poor in spirit; he is humble and modest in his behaviour amongst men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little children before God, when they are haughty, assuming, and impudent in their behaviour amongst men. The apostle informs us, that the design of the gospel is to cut off all glorying, not only before God, but also before men, Rom. iv. 1. 2. Some pretend to great humiliation, that are very haughty, audacious, and assuming in their external appearance and behaviour: but they ought to -confider those scriptures, Pfal. exxxi. 1. Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Prov. vi. 16. 17. These fix things doth the Lord hate; yea feven are an abomination un-' to him: a proud look, &c.'-Chap. xxi. 4. 'An high look, and a proud heart are fin.' Plal. xviii. 27. 4 Thou

eyes, and empty.—When the man hath got some know-ledge, and can discourse pretty well, and hath some taste of the heavenly gift, some sweet illapses of grace, and so his conscience is pretty well quieted: and if he hath got some answer to his prayers, and hath sweet affections, he grows full: and having ease to his conscience, casts off sense, and daily groaning under sin. And hence the spirit of prayer dies: he loses his esteem of God's ordinances; seels not such need of them; or gets no good, feels no life or power by them.—This is the world condition of some; but yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with the Spirit the Lord empties him; and the more, the longer he lives. So that though others think he needs not much grace, yet he accounts himself the poorest." Shepard's Parable of the ten virgins, Part II. p. 132.

"After all fillings, be ever empty, hungry, and feeling need, and praying for more." Ibid. p. 151.

"Truly, brethren, when I fee the curse of God upon many Christians, that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I stand adering the riches of the Lord's mercy, to a little handful of poor believers; not only in making them empty, but in keeping them so all their days." Shepard's Sound Believer, the late edition in Boston, p. 158. 139.

* Thou wilt bring down high looks.' And Pfal. ci. 5. " Him that hath an high look, and a proud heart, I will not suffer. 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Charity vaunteth ont itself, doth not behave itself unseemly.' There is a certain amiable modelty and fear that belongs to a Christian behaviour among men, arising from humility, that the scripture often speaks of; 1 Pet. iii. 15. " Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you, -with meekness and fear.' Rom. xiii. 7. 'Fear, to whom fear.' 2 Cor. vii. 15. 'Whilft he remem-· bereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and * trembling you received him.' Eph. vi. 5. 'Ser-* vants, be obedient to them that are your masters ac-* cording to the flesh, with fear and trembling.' 1 Pet. ii. 18. ' Servants be subject to your masters with all fear.' 1 Pet. iii. 2. ' While they behold your chaste conversa-* tion coupled with fear.' I Tim. ii. 9. 'That women 4dorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedones and sobriety.' In this respect a Christian is like a fittle child; a little child is modest before men, and his heart is apt to be possessed with fear and awe amongst them.

The fame spirit will dispose a Christian to honour all men; 1 Pet. ii. 17. ' Honour all men.' A humble Christian is not only disposed to honour the faints in his behaviour; but others also, in all those ways that do not imply a vitible approbation of their fins. Thus Abraham, the great pattern of believers, honoured the children of Heth; Gen xxiii. 11. 12. ' Abraham * stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the ' land.' This was a remarkable instance of a humble behaviour towards them that were out of Christ, and that Abraham knew to be accurfed: and therefore would by no means fuffer his fervant to take a wife to his fon, from among them; and Efau's wives, being of these children of Heth, were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. So Paul honoured Festus, Acts xxvi. 25. 'I am not mad, most noble Festus.' Not only will Christian humility dispose persons to honour those wicked men that are out of the visible church, but also false

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brethren and persecutors. As Jacob, when he was in an excellent frame, having just been wrestling all night with God, and received the Blessing, honoured Esau, his false and persecuting brother; Gen. xxxiii. 3. ' Jacob bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother Esau.' So he called him lord; and commanded all his family to honour him in like manner.

Thus I have endeavoured to describe the heart and behaviour of one that is governed by a truly gracious humility, as exactly agreeable to the scriptures as I am able.

Now, it is out of fuch a heart as this, that all truly holy affections do flow. Christian affections are like Mary's precious ointment that the poured on Christ's head, that filled the whole house with a sweet odour. That was poured out of an alabaster-box; so gracious affections flow out to Christ out of a pure heart. That was poured out of a broken box; until the box was broken, the ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its odour: so gracious affections flow out of a broken heart. Gracious affections are also like those of Mary Magdalene, (Luke vii. at the latter end), who also pours precious ointment on Christ, out of an alabafter broken box, anointing therewith the feet of Jelus, when she had washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. All gracious affections, that are a sweet odour to Christ, and that fill the soul of a Christian with an heavenly sweetness and fragrancy, are broken-hearted affections. A truly Christian love, either to God or men, is a humble broken-hearted love. The defires of the faints, however earnest, are humble defires: their hope is an humble hope; and their joy, even when it is unspeakable, and full of glory, is a humble broken-hearted joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in spirit, and more like a little child, and more dispesed to an universal lowliness of behaviour.

VII. Another thing, wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended

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All gracious affections do arife from a spiritual understanding, in which the foul has the excellency and glory of divine things difcovered to it, as was shewn before. But all spiritual discoveries are transforming; and not only make an alteration of the prefent exercise, fensation, and frame of the soul; but such power and efficacy have they, that they make an alteration in the very nature of the foul; 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as in a glafs the glory of the · Lord, are changed into the fame image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Such power as this is properly divine power, and is peculiarto the Spirit of the Lord: other power may make a great alteration in men's prefent frames and feelings; but it is the power of a Creator only that can change the nature, or give a new nature. And no discoveries or illuminations, but those that are divine and supernatural. will have this supernatural effect. But this effect all. those discoveries have, that are truly divine. The soul; is deeply affected by these discoveries, and so affected? as to be transformed.

Thus it is with those affections that the soul is the subject of in its conversion. The scripture representations of conversion do strongly imply and signify a change of nature: such as being born again; becoming new creatures; rising from the dead; being re-

newed in the fpirit of the mind; dying to fin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man; a being ingrafted into a new thock; a having a divine feed implented in the heart.

flock; a having a divine feed implanted in the heart; a being made partakers of the divine nature, &c.

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons, that think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretences, however they have been affected †. Conversion

+ "I would not judge of the whole foul's coming to Christ, so much by sudden pangs, as by inward bent. For the.

version (if we may give any credit to the scripture) is a great and universal change of the man, turning him from fin to God. A man may be reftrained from fin. before he is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only restrained from fin, his very heart and nature is turned from it unto holinefs: fo that thenceforward he becomes a holy person, and an enemy to sin. If therefore, after a person's high affections, at his suppofed first conversion, it comes to that in a little time, that there is no very fensible, or remarkable alteration in him, as to those bad qualities, and evil habits, which before were vifible in him, and he is ordinarily under the prevalence of the same kind of dispositions that he: pled to be, and the fame things feem to belong to his: character; he appears as felfish, carnal, as stopid, and perverle, as unchristian and unfavoury as ever; it isgreater evidence against him, than the brightest flory of experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in-Christ Jesus neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, neither high profession, nor low profession, neither a fair c flory, nor a broken one, avails any thing; but a new creature. .

If there be a very great alteration visible in a personfor a while; if it be not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a stated manner, to be much as he used to be; it appears to be no change of nature; for nature is an abiding thing. A swine that is of a filthy nature may be washed, but the swimsh nature remains; and a dove that is of a cleanly nature may be defiled, but its cleanly nature remains +

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the whole foul, in affectionate expressions and actions, may be carried to Christ; but being without this bear, and change of affections, is unfound." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 202.

be gone, but the native principle of cold remains still. You may r move the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature. Where the power of fin lies, change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness to D d 3

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Indeed allowances must be made for the natural temper; conversion does not entirely root out the natural temper; those fins which a man by his natural constitution was most inclined to before his conversion, he may be most apt to fall into still. But yet conversion will make a great alteration even with respect to these fins. Though grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural temper, vet it is of great power and efficacy with respect to it, to correct it. The change that is wrought in conversion, is an universal change; grace changes a man with respect to whatever is finful, in him; the old man is put off, and the new man put on; he is fanctified throughout; and the man becomes. a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new; all fin is mortified, constitution fins, as well as others. If a man before his conversion, was by his natural constitution especially inclined to lasciviousness, or drunkenness, or maliciousness; converting grace will make a great alteration in him, with respect to these evil dispositions; so that however he may be still most in danger of these sins, yet they shall. no longer have dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his character. Yea, true repentance. does in some respects, especially turn a man against his own iniquity, that wherein he has been most guilty, and has chiefly dishonoured God. He that forfakes other fins, but faves his leading fin, the iniquity he is chiefly inclined to, is like Saul, when fent against God's enemies the Amalekites, with a strict charge to fave none of them alive, but utterly to destroy them, small and great; who utterly destroyed inferior people, but saved? the king, the chief of them all, alive.

Some foolishly make it an argument in favour of their discoveries and affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any life or sense, or any thing

beyond.

civility, and fashions of the world, to escape the pollutions thereof, change of lusts, nay quenching them for a time: but the nature is never changed, in the best hypocrite that ever was." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 194.

dence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themselves, because (say they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can see and seel nothing,

and are no better than they used to be.

It is very true, that all grace and goodness in the hearts of the faints is entirely from God; and they are univerfally and immediately dependent on him for it But yet these persons are mistaken, as to the manner of God's communicating himself and his holy Spirit, in imparting faving grace to the foul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the faculties of the foul, and to dwell there after the manner of a principle of nature; fo that the foul, in being endued with grace, is endued with a new nature; but nature is an abiding thing. All the exercises of grace are entirely from Christ: but those exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive, moves and ftirs fomething that is without life, and yet remains without life; but as having life communicated to it; fo as through Christ's power, to have inherent in. itself, a vital nature. In the foul where Christ favingly is, there he lives. He does not only live without it, fo as violently to actuate it, but he lives in it, fo that that also is alive. Grace in the foul is as much from Christ, as the light in a glass, held out in the sun-beams, is from the sun. But this represents the manner of the communication of grace to the foul, but in part; because the glass remains as it was, the nature of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any lightfomeness in its nature as ever. But the foul of a faint receives. light from the Sun of righteousness, in such a manner, that its nature is changed, and it becomes properly 2. luminous thing; not only does the fun shine in the faints, but they also become little funs, partaking of the nature of the fountain of their light. In this respect, the manner of their derivation of light, is like that of the lamps in the tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting glass; which though they were lift up by fire from heaven, yet thereby became themselves burning shining things.

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things. The faints do not only drink of the water of life, that flows from the original fountain; but this water becomes a fountain of water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them, John iv 14. and chap. vii. 38. 39. Grace is compared to a feed implanted, that not only is in the ground, but has hold of it, has root there, and grows there, and is an abiding principle.

of life and nature there.

As it is with spiritual discoveries and affections given at first conversion, so it is in all illuminations and affections of that kind, that persons are the subjects of afterwards; they are all transforming. There is a like divine power and energy in them, as in the first discoveries: and they still reach the bottom of the heart, and affect and alter the very nature of the foul, in proportion to the degree in which they are given. And a transformation of pature is continued and carried on by them. to the end of life, until-it is brought to perfection inglory. Hence the progress of the work of grace in the. hearts of the faints, is reprefented in scripture, as a continued conversion and renovation of nature. So the apoftle exhorts those that were at 'Rome, beloved of God, called to be faints,' and that were the subjects of God's redeeming mercies, 'to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, Rom. xii. 1. 2. I befeech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye prefent. your bodies a living facrifice ; and be not conform. ed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' Compared with chap. i. 7. So the apolile writing to the * faints and faithful in . Christ Jesus, that were at Ephesus, (Eph. i. 1.) and those who were once dead in trespasses and fins, but. were now quickened, and raised up, and made to sit: together in heavenly places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that were once far off, ... but were now made nigh by the blood of Christ, and that were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the faints, and of the household of God, and that were built together for an habitation of God:

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Bala be l " through the Spirit;' I fay, the apostle writing to these, tells them, ' that he ceased not to pray for them, that God would give them the Spirit of wifdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ; the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, that they might know,. or experience, what was the exceeding greatness of God's power towards them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," Eph. i. 16. to the end. In this the apostle has respect: to the glorious power and work of God in converting and renewing the foul; as is most plain by the sequel. So the apostle exhorts the same persons to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful · lufts; and be renewed in the spirit of their minds; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 22. 23. 24.

There is a fort of high affections that some have from time to time, that leave them without any manner of appearance of an abiding effect. They go off fuddenly; so that from the very height of their emotion, and feeming rapture, they pass at once to be quite dead, and void of all fense and activity. It furely is not wont to be thus with high gracious affections *; they leave a fweet favour and relish of divine things on the heart, and a stronger bent of foul towards God and holiness. As Moses's face not only shone while he was in the mount, extraordinarily converfing with God, but it continued to shine after he came down from the mount. When men have been converling with Christ in an extraordipary manner, there is a fensible effect of it remains upon them; there is fomething remarkable in their dispositionand frame, which if we take knowledge of, and trace to its cause, we shall find it is because they have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

VIII

^{+ &}quot;Do you think the Holy Ghoft comes on a man as on-Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing?" Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 126.

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VIII. Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamb-like, dove-like spirit and temper of Jesus Christ; or in other words, they naturally beget and promote such a spirit of love, meekness, unietness, forgiveness and mercy, as appeared in Christ.

The evidence of this in the scripture is very abundant. If we judge of the nature of Christianity, and the proper spirit of the gospel, by the word of God, this spirit is what may, by way of eminency, be called the Christian spirit; and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing disposition of the hearts of Christians, as Christians. When some of the disciples of Christ said Something, through inconsideration and infirmity, that: was not agreeable to fuch a spirit, Christ told them, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of; Luke ix. 55. implying that this spirit that I am speaking of, is the proper spirit of his religion and kingdom. All that are truly godly, and real disciples of Christ, have this spirit in them; and not only so, but they are of this fpirit; it is the spirit by which they are so posseffed and governed, that it is their true and proper character. This is evident by what the wife man fays, Prov. xvii. 27. (having respect plainly to such a spirit as this), A man of understanding is of an excellent: 4 spirit: and by the particular description Christ gives: of the qualities and temper of fuch as are truly bleffed, that shall obtain mercy, and are God's children and heirs, Matth. v. Bleffed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Bleffed are the merciful : for they fhall obtain mercy. Bleffed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God. 'And that. this spirit is the special character of the elect of God, is manifested by Col. iii. 12. 13. Put on therefore as * theelect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-lufferting; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.' And the apostle speaking of that temper and disposition, which he speaks of as the most excellent and

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effential thing in Christianity, and that without which none are true Christians, and the most glorious profes fion and gifts are nothing, (calling this spirit by the name of charity), he describes it thus; (1 Cor. xiii. 4. 5.) 'Charity fuffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not eafly provoked, thinketh no evil.' And the fame apostle, Gal. v. defignedly declaring the diftinguishing marks and fruits of true Christian grace, chiefly inlifts on the things that appertain to such a temper and spirit as I am speaking of ver. 22 23 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long fuffering, gentlenels, goodnels, faith, meeknels, tempe-' rance.' And so does the apostle James, in describing true grace, or that wildom that is from above, with that declared delign, that others who are of a contrary fpirit may not deceive themselves, and lie against the truth, in profeshing to be Christians, when they are not, lames iii. 14 .-- 17. ' If ye have bitter envying and ftrife in your hearts, glory not; and lie not against the truth. This wildom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, fenfual, devilifh. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wildom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eafy to be intreated, full of " mercy and good fruits."

Every thing that appertains to holiness of heart, does indeed belong to the nature of true Christianity, and the character of Christians; but a spirit of holiness as appearing in some particular graces, may more especially be called the Christian spirit or temper. There are some amiable qualities and virtues, that do more especially agree with the nature of the gospel constitution, and Christian profession; because there is a special agreeableness in them, with those divine attributes which God has more remarkably manifested and glorised in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, that is the grand subject of the Christian revelation; and also a special agreeableness

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agreeableness with those virtues that were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that affair, and the bleffed example he hath therein fet us; and likewife because they are peculiarly agreeable to the special drift and design of the work of redemption, and the benefits we thereby receive, and the relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And thele virtues are fuch as humility, meeknefs, love, forgivenels, and mercy. These things therefore especially

belong to the character of Christians, as such.

These things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great head of the Christian church. They are so spoken of in the prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited, Marth. xxi. 5. 'Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and fitting upon an als, ' and a colt the fole of an afs.' So Christ himself speaks of them, Matth. xi. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' The same appears by the name by which Christ is so often called in scripture, viz. the Lamb. And as these things are especially the character of Christ, so they are also especially the character of Christians. Christians are Christ-like; none deferve the name of Christians, that are not so in their prevailing character. ' The new man is renewed, after the image of him that creates him, Col. iii. 1-0. ' All true Christians behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18. The elect are all predeftinated to be comformed to the image of the Son of -God, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. As we have borne the image of the first man, that is earthly, so we must also bear the image of the heavenly; for as is the earthy, fuch are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, 4 fuch are they also that are heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 47. 48. 49. Christ is full of grace; and Christians all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace; i. e. there is grace in Christians answering to grace in Christ, such-2. 2.

an answerableness as there is between the wax and the feal; there is character for character: fuch kind of graces, fuch a spirit and temper, the same things that belong to Christ's character, belong to theirs. disposition, wherein Christ's character does in a special manner confift, therein does his image in a special manner confift. Christians that shine by resecting the light of the Sun of righteousness, do shine with the same fort of brightness, the same mild, sweet, and pleasant beams. These lamps of the spiritual temple, that are enkindled by fire from heaven, burn with the fame fort of flame. The branch is of the fame nature with the stock and root, has the same sap, and bears the same fort of fruit. The members have the same kind of life with the head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same temper and spirit that Christ is of; when they are his flesh and his bone, yea, are one spirit, I Cor. vi. 17. and live fo, that it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them. A Christian spirit is Christ's mark that he sets upon the souls of his people; his feal in their foreheads, bearing his image and Superscription. Christians are the followers of Christ: and they are fo, as they are obedient to that call of Christ, Matth. xi. 28. 29. ' Come to me, and learn of ' me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' They follow him as the Lamb; Rev. xiv. 4. 'Thefe are they which ' follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' True Christians are as it were clothed with the meek, quiet, and loving temper of Christ; for as many as are in Christ, have put on Christ. And in this respect the church is clothed with the fun, not only by being clothed with his imputed righteoufness, but also by being adorned with his graces, Rom. xiii. 14. Christ the great Shepherd, is himself a lamb, and believers are also lambs; all the flock are lambs: John xxi. 15. ' Feed 'my lambs.' Luke x. 3. 'I fend you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.' The redemption of the church by Christ from the power of the devil, was typified of old, by David's delivering the lamb out of the mouth of the lion and the bear.

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That fuch manner of virtue as has been spoken of, is the very nature of the Christian spirit, or the spirit that worketh in Christ, and in his members, and in the diftinguishing nature of it, is evident by this, that the dove is the very symbol or emblem, chosen of God, to represent it. Those things are fittest emblems of other things, which do best represent that which is most distinguishing in their nature. The Spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, defcended on him like a dove. The dove is a noted emblem of meekness, harmlessness, peace, and love. But the same Spirit that descended on the head of the church, descends to the members. ' God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts,' Gal. iv. 6. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,' Rom. viii. 9. There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical body, head and members, I Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 4. Christ breathes his own Spirit on his disciples, John xx. 22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a dove, so Christians also ' have an anointing from the Holy One,' I John ii. 20. 27. And they are anointed with the fame oil; it is the fame ' precious ointment on the head, that goes down to the skirts of the garments.' And on both it is a spirit of peace and love: Psal. cxxxiii. 1. 2. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.' The oil on Aaron's garments had the fame fweet and inimitable odour with that on his head; the smell of the same sweet spices, Christian affections, and a Christian behaviour, is but the flowing out of the favour of Christ's sweet ointments. Because the church has a dove-like temper and disposition, therefore it is faid of her that she has doves eyes, Cant, i. 15. 'Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes.' And chap. iv. 1. 'Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold,

thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes within thy locks.' The same that is said of Christ, chap. vi. 12. 'His eyes are as the eyes of doves.' And the church is frequently compared to a dove in scripture, Cant. ii. 14. 'O my dove, that art in the clests of the rock.'—Chap. v. 2. 'Open to me, my love, my dove.' And Chap. vi. 9. 'My dove, my undefiled is but one.' Psal. lxviii. 13. 'Ye shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' And lxxiv. 19. 'O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the multitude of the wicked.' The dove that Noah sent out of the ark, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot, until she returned, was a type of a true saint.

Meekness is so much the character of the saints, that the meek and the godly, are used as synonymous terms in scripture: so Psal. xxxvii. 10. 11. the wicked and the meek are set in opposition one to another, as wicked and godly, 'Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be:—but the meek shall inherit the earth.' So Psal. cxlvii. 6. 'The Lord listeth up the meek: he

casteth the wicked down to the ground.'

It is doubtless very much on this account, that Christ represents all his disciples, all the heirs of heaven, as little children, Matth. xix. 14. ' Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Matth. x. 42. ' Who-· foever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, in the name of a disciple, verily ' I fay unto you, he shall in no wife lose his reward.' Matth. xviii. 6. ' Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c.' ver. 10. 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.' ver. 14. 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these ' little ones should perish.' John xiii. 33. ' Little ' children, yet a little while I am with you.' Little children are innocent and harmless; they do not do a great deal of mischief in the world; men need not be afraid of them; they are no dangerous fort of persons; Ee 2 their

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their anger does not last long, they do not lay up injuries in high refentment, entertaining deep and rooted malice. So Christians, in malice, are children, 1 Cor. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are not versed in the arts of fiction and deceit; and are strangers to artful disguises. They are yieldable and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; do not trust to their own understanding, but rely on the instructions of parents, and others of superior understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little children, is not only a thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve of, and aim at, and which some of extraordinary proficiency do attain to; but it is their universal character, and absolutely neceffary in order to entering into the kingdom of heaven; unless Christ was mistaken, Matth. xviii. 3. 'Verily I fay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as · little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of ' heaven.' Mark x. 15. ' Verily I say unto you, ' Whofoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.'

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such thing as Christian fortitude, and boldness for Christ, being good soldiers in the Christian warfare, and coming out bold against the enemies of Christ and his people?

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a thing. The whole Christian life is compared to a warfare, and fitly so. And the most eminent Christians are the best soldiers, endued with the greatest degrees of Christian fortitude. And it is the duty of God's people to be stedsast and vigorous in their opposition to the designs and ways of such as are endeavouring to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, and the interest of religion. But yet many persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the nature of Christian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse thing from a brutal sierceness, or the boldness of beasts of prey. True Christian fortitude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things;

in ruling and suppressing the evil, and unruly passions and affections of the mind; and in stedfastly and freely exerting, and following good affections and dispositions, without being hindered by finful fear, or the opposition But the passions that are restrained and kept under, in the exercise of this Christian strength and fortitude, are those very passions that are vigorously and violently exerted in a false boldness for Christ. And those affections that are vigorously exerted in true fortitude, are those Christian holy affections, that are directly contrary to them. Though Christian fortitude appears, in withstanding and counteracting the enemies that are without us; yet it much more appears, in refisting and suppressing the enemies that are within us; because: they are our worst and strongest enemies, and have greatest advantage against us. The strength of the good foldier of Jesus Christ, appears in nothing more, than in stedfastly maintaining the holy calm, meekness, sweetness, and benevolence of his mind, amidst all the storms, injuries, strange behaviour, and surprising acts and events of this evil and unreasonable world. The scripture feems to intimate that true fortitude confilts chiefly in this, Prov. xvi. 32. "He that is flow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."

The directest and surest way in the world, to make a right judgment what a holy sortitude is, in sighting with God's enemies, is to look to the Captain of all God's hosts, and our greater leader and example, and see wherein his fortitude and valour appeared, in his chief conslict, and in the time of the greatest battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with these enemies, when he fought with them all alone, and of the people there was none with him, and exercised his fortitude in the highest degree that ever he did, and got that glorious victory that will be celebrated in the praises and triumphs of all the hosts of heaven, throughout all eternity; even to Jesus Christ in the time of his last suf-

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ferings, when his enemies in earth and hell made their most violent attack upon him, compassing him round on every fide, like renting and roaring lions. Doubtless here we shall see the fortitude of a holy warrior and champion in the cause of God, in its highest perfection and greatest lustre, and an example sit for the soldiers to follow, that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy boldness and valour at that time? not in the exercise of any fiery passions; not in fierce and violent speeches, and vehemently declaiming against, and crying out of the intolerable wickedness of opposers, giving them their own in plain terms; but in not opening his mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, not opening his mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel enemies, because they knew not what they did; not shedding others blood, but with all conquering patience and love, shedding his own. Indeed one of his disciples, that made a forward pretence to boldness for Christ, and confidently declared he would fooner die with Christ than deny him, began to Jay about him with a fword: but Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the wound he gives. ver was the patience, meekness, love, and forgiveness of Christ, in so glorious a manifestation, as at that time. Never did he appear fo much a Lamb, and never did he shew so much of the dove-like spirit, as at that time. If therefore we see any of the followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable, and wicked opposition of God's and his own enemies, maintaining under all this temptation, the humility, quietness, and gentleness of a lamb, and the harmlessness, and love, and fweetness of a dove, we may well judge that here is a good foldier of Jefus Christ.

When persons are sierce and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter passions, it shows weakness, instead of strength and fortitude. I Cor. iii. at the beginning, And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiri-

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tual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.
- For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among

' you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not car-

' nal, and walk as men?'

There is a pretended boldness for Christ that arises from no better principle than pride. A man may be forward to expose himself to the dislike of the world, and even to provoke their displeasure out of pride. For it is the nature of spiritual pride to cause men to seek distinction and fingularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at war with those that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their party. True boldness for Christ is universal, and overcomes all, and carries men above the displeasure of friends and foes; fo that they will forfake all rather than Christ; and will rather offend all parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Christ. And that duty which tries whether a man is willing to be despised by them that are of his own party, and thought the least worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper trial of his boldness for Christ, than his being forward to expose himself to the reproach of opposers. The apostle sought not glory, not only of Heathens and Jews, but of Christians; as he declares, 1 Thess. ii. 26. * He is bold for Christ, that has Christian fortitude enough, to confess his fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his knees before opposers. Such things as these are a vally greater evidence of holy boldness, than resolutely and fiercely confronting oppofers.

As some are much mistaken concerning the nature of true boldness for Christ, so they are concerning Christian zeal. It is indeed a stame, but a sweet one;

* Mr Shepard, speaking of hypocrites affecting applause, says, "Hence men forsake their friends, and trample under foot the scorns of the world: they have credit elsewhere. To maintain their interest in the love of godly men, they will suffer much." Parable of the ten virgins, Part I. p. 180.

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or rather it is the heat and fervour of a fweet flame. For the flame of which it is the heat, is no other than that of divine love, or Christian charity; which is the fweetest and most benevolent thing that is, or can be, in the heart of man or angel. Zeal is the fervour of this flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the good that is its object, in defires of it, and pursuit after it; and so consequentially, in opposition to the evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed opposition, and vigorous opposition, that is a part of it, or rather is an attendant of it; but it is against things, and not persons. Bitterness against the persons of men is no part of it, but is very contrary to it; infomuch that so much the warmer true zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the farther are perfons from fuch bitternels, and fo much fuller of love, both to the evil and to the good. As appears from what has been just now otherved, that it is no other, in its very nature and effence, than the fervour of a spirit of Christian love. And as to what opposition there is in it to things, it is firstly and chiefly against the evil things in the person himself, who has this zeal; against the enemies of God and holiness, that are in his own heart; (as these are most in his view, and what he is most to do with); and but secondarily against the fins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Christian zeal, that is contrary to that spirit of meekness, gentleness, and love, that spirit of a little child, a lamb and dove, that has been spoken of; but it is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to say something particularly concerning this Christian spirit I have been speaking of, as exercised in these three things, forgiveness, love, and mercy; I would observe that the scripture is very clear and express concerning the absolute necessity of each of these, as belonging to the temper and character of every Christian

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It is so as to a forgiving spirit, or a disposition to overlook and forgive injuries. Christ gives it to us both n e

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as a negative and positive evidence; and is express in teaching us, that if we are of fuch a spirit, it is a fign that we are in a state of forgiveness and favour ourfelves; and that if we are not of such a spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and feems to take special care that we should take good notice of it, and always bear it on our minds. Matth. vi. 12. 14. 15. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.-For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will ' also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Christ expresses the same again at another time, Mark xi. 25. 26. and again in Matth. xviii. 22. to the end, in the parable of the fervant that owed his lord ten thousand talents, that would not forgive his fellow-fervant an hundred pence: and therefore was delivered to the tormentors. In the application of the parable Christ says, ver. 35. 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your hearts forgive not > every one his brother their trespasses.'

And that all true faints are of a loving, benevolent, and beneficent temper, the scripture is very plain and Without it the apostle tells us, though we should speak with the tongues of men and angels, we are as a founding brafs, or a tinkling cymbal: and that though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet without this spirit we are nothing. And there is no one virtue or disposition of the mind, that is so often, and so expressly insisted on, in the marks that are laid down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a fign that is peculiarly diffinguishing, by which all may know Christ's disciples, and by which they may know themselves; and is often laid down; both as a negative and politive evidence. Christ calls the law of love, by way of eminency, his commandment, John xiii. 34. · A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love

one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And Chap. xv. 12. This is my com-

mandment,

mandment, That ye love one another as I have loved ' you. And ver. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another. And fays, chap. xiii. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' And chap. xiv. 21. (Itill with a special reference to this which he calls his commandment), ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' The beloved disciple, who had so much of this sweet temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his epistles. There is none of the apostles is so much in laying down express signs of grace, for professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his figns; he infifts fcarcely on any thing elfe, but a spirit of Christian love, and an agreeable practice; I John ii. o. 10. 'He that faith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even untill now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the ' light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. ' Chap. iii. 14. We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren : he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. ver. 18. 19. My little children, let us not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall affure our hearts before him, ver. 23. 24. This is his ' commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Chap. iv. 7. 8. Beloved, let us love one another: for -· love is of God; and every one that loveth, is born of · God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love. ver. 12. 13. No man hath feen God at any time. If we love one another, · God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. · Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit. ver. 16. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. ver 20. If a man fay, I love God, and

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crips (wh hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath feen, how can he love God

whom he hath not feen?"

And the scripture is as plain as it is possible it should be, that none are true faints, but those whose true character it is, that they are of a disposition to pity and relieve their fellow-creatures, that are poor, indigent, and afflicted; Pfal. xxxvii 21. 'The righteous sheweth ' mercy, and giveth. ver 26. ' He is ever merciful, and ' lendeth. Psal. cxii. 5. ' A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth. ver. 9. He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor. Prov. xiv. 31. He ' that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor. Prov. xxi. 26. The righteous giveth, and spareth not. Jer. xxii. 16. He judgeth the cause of the poor and needy, then it was well with him: was not this to know ' me ? faith the Lord. Jam. i. 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To vifit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, &c. ' Hof. vi 6. For I have defired mercy, and not fa-' crifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings. Matth. v. 7. Bleffed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. 2 Cor. viii. 8. I speak onot by commandment, but by occasion of the forward-' ness of others, and to prove the fincerity of your love. ' Jam. ii. 13 .- 16. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. - What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man fay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith fave him? If a brother or fister be naked, and destitute of daily food; ' and one of you fay unto them, Depart in peace, be ' you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them onot those things which are needful to the body, what ' doth it profit? I John iii. 17. Whoso hath this world's good, and feeth his brother have need, and ' shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how ' dwelleth the love of God in him?' Christ in that defcription he gives us of the day of judgment, Matth. xxv. (which is the most particular that we have in all the Bible),

Bible), reprefents that judgment will be passed at that day, according as men have been found to have been of a merciful spirit and practice, or otherwise. Christ's design in giving such a description of the process of that day, is plainly to possess all his followers with that apprehension, that unless this was their spirit and practice, there was no hope of their being accepted and owned by him at that day Therefore this is an apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in scripture, that a righteous man, and a merciful man are synonymous expressions; Is lvii. 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

Thus we see how full, clear, and abundant, the evidence from scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the government of that lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the nature of the saving grace of the gospel, and the proper spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine, that all truly Christian assections are attended with such a spirit, and that this is the natural tendency of the sear and hope, the forrow and the joy, the considence and the zeal of true Christ

tians.

None will understand me, that true Christians have no remains of a contrary spirit, and can never, in any instances, be guilty of a behaviour disagreeable to such a spirit. But this I affirm, and shall assim, until I deny the Bible to be any thing worth, that every thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this tendency, and works this way; and that there is no true Christian upon earth, but is so under the prevailing power of such a spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his character: and that therefore ministers, and others, have no warrant from Christ to encourage persons that are of a contrary character and behaviour, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair story of illuminations and discoveries.

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discoveries. In so doing, they would set up their own wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that rule by which Christ has declared all men should know his disciples. Some persons place religion to much in certain transient illuminations and impressions. (especially if they are in such a particular method and order), and so little in the spirit and temper are persons of, that they greatly deform religion, and form notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the scriptures. The scripture knows of no fuch true Christians, as are of a fordid, felfish, cross and contentions spirit. Nothing can be invented that is a greater absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful, true Christian. We must learn the way of bringing men to rules, and not rules to men, and fo strain and stretch the rules of God's word, to take in ourselves, and some of our neighbours, until we make them wholly of none effect.

It is true, that allowances must be made for men's natural temper, with regard to these things, as well as others; but not such allowances, as to allow men, that once were wolves and serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable change in the spirit of their mind. The change made by true conversion is wont to be most remarkable and sensible, with respect to that which before was the wickedness the person was most notoriously guilty of. Grace has as great a tendency to restrain and mortify such sins, as are contrary to the spirit that has been spoken of, as it is to mortify drunkenness or laseiviousness. Yea, the scripture represents the change wrought by gospel-grace, as especially appearing in an alteration of the former sort; Is. xi. 6,—9. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall

^{&#}x27; lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young ion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall

lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together: and the

lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking

child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned

child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. They fhall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:

for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the

Lord, as the waters cover the fea.' And to the fame purpose is Is. 1xv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive times of the Christian church, converts were remarkably changed in this respect: Tit. iii.

3. &c. 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish,

disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleafures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating

one another. But after that the kindness and love of

God our Saviour toward man appeared,—he faved us

by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the

' Holy Ghost. And Col. iii. 7. 8. 'In the which ye al-

fo walked fome time, when ye lived in them. But

onow you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

IX. Gracious affections foften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit.

False affections, however persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a tendency in the end to harden the heart. A disposition to some kind of passions may be established; such as imply felffeeking, felf-exaltation, and opposition to others. But false affections, with the delusion that attends them, sinally tend to stupify the mind, and shut it up against those affections wherein tenderness of heart consists: and the effect of them at last is, that persons in the setted frame of their minds, become less affected with their present and past sins, and less conscientious with respect to future fins, less moved with the warnings and cautions of God's word, or God's chastisements in his providence, more careless of the frame of their hearts, and the manner and tendency of their behaviour, less quick-fighted to discern what is finful, less afraid of the appearance of evil, than they were while they were under legal awakenings and fears of hell. Now they have been the subjects of such and such impressions and affections, and have a high opinion of themselves, and look

look on their state to be fafe; they can be much more eafy than before, in living in the neglect of duties that are troublesome and inconvenient; and are much more flow and partial in complying with difficult commands; are in no measure so alarmed at the appearance of their own defects and transgressions; are emboldened to favour themselves more, with respect to the labour, and painful care and exactness in their walk, and more easily yield to temptations, and the folicitations of their lufts; and have far less care of their behaviour, when they come into the holy prefence of God, in the time of public or private worship. Formerly it may be, under legal convictions, they took much pains in religion, and denied themselves in many things; but now they think themselves out of danger of hell, they very much put off the burden of the cross, and fave themselves the trouble of difficult duties, and allow themselves more of the comfort of the enjoyment of their ease and their lufts.

Such persons as these, instead of embracing Christ as their Saviour from fin, they trust in him as the faviour of their fins; instead of slying to him as their refuge from their spiritual enemies, they make use of him as the defence of their spiritual enemies, from God, and to strengthen them against him. They make Christ the minister of sin, and great officer and vicegerent of the devil, to strengthen his interest, and make him above all things in the world strong against Jehovah; fo that they may fin against him with good courage, and without any fear, being effectually fecured from reftraints, by his most solemn warnings and most awful threatenings. They trust in Christ to preserve to them the quiet enjoyment of their fins, and to be their shield to defend them from God's displeasure; while they come close to him, even to his bosom, the place of his children, to fight against him, with their mortal weapons, hid under their skirts +. However, some of these, Ff2

† These are hypocrites that believe, but fail in regard of

at the same time, make a great profession of love to God, and afforance of his favour, and great joy in tasting the sweetness of his love.

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the use of the gospel, and of the Lord Jesus. And these weread of, Jude 3. viz. of some men that did turn grace into wantonness. For therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but also the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus, works in him all manner of unrighteousness. And it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, Oh then to cry for grace and Christ, and afterwards grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 126.

Again, p. 232. Mr Shepard speaks of such hypocrites as those, "who, like strange eggs, being put into the same nest, where honest men have lived, they have been hatched up; and when they are young, keep their nest, and live by crying and opening their mouths wide after the Lord, and the food of his word; but when their wings are grown, and they have got fome affections, some knowledge, some hope of mercy, are hardened thereby to fly from God." And adds, "Can that man be good, whom God's grace makes

worfe?"

Again, Part II. p. 167. "When men fly to Christ in times of peace, that so they may preserve their fins with greater peace of conscience; so that sin makes them sly to Christ, as well as misery, not that they may destroy and abolish fin, but that they may be preserved in their fins with peace; then men may be faid to apprehend Christ only by a seeming faith. Many an heart secretly saith this, if I can have my fin, and peace, and conscience quiet for the present, and God merciful to pardon it afterward; hence he doth rely (as he faith) only on the mercy of God in Christ: and now this hardens and blinds him, and makes him fecure, and his faith is fermon-proof, nothing stirs him. -And were it not for their faith they should despair, but this keeps them up. And now they think if they have any trouble of mind, the devil troubles them; and so make Christ and faith protectors of sin, not purifiers from sin; which is most dreadful; turning grace to wantonness, as they did facrifice. So these would fin under the shadow of Christ, because the shadow is good and sweet, Mic. iii. II. They had subtile fly ends in good duties; for therein may lie.

After this manner they trusted in Christ, that the apostle Jude speaks of, who crept in among the saints unknown; but were really uzgodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude 4. These are they that trust in their being righteous; and because God has promised that the righteous shall surely live, or certainly be saved, are therefore emboldened to commit iniquity, whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall sure-

commit iniquity; all his righteousness shall not be re-

' membered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.'

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they turn a heart of stone more and more into a heart of sless. An holy love and hope are principles that are vastly more esticacious upon the heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a dread of sin, or whatever might displease and offend God, and to engage it to watchfulness, and care, and strictness, than a slavish sear of hell. Gracious affections, as was observed before; slow out of a contrite heart, or (as the word signifies) a bruised heart, bruised and broken with godly forrow; which makes the heart tender, as bruised sless is tender, and easily hurt. Godly forrow has much greater influence to make the heart tender, than mere legal forrow from selfish principles.

The tenderness of the heart of a true Christian, is elegantly signified by our Saviour, in his comparing such a one to a little child. The flesh of a little child is ve-

lie a man's fin: yet they lean upon the Lord.—When money-changers came into the temple, "You have made it a "den of thieves." Thieves when hunted, flyto their den or cave, and there they are fecure against all searchers, and hue-and-cries: so here. But Christ whipped them out. So when men are pursued with cries and fears of conscience, away to Christ they go as to their den, not as saints, to pray and lament out the life of their sin there, but to preserve their sin. This is vile; will the Lord receive such?

ry tender; so is the heart of one that is new-born. This is represented in what we are told of Naaman's cure of his leprofy, by his washing in Jordan, by the direction of the prophet; which was undoubtedly a type of the renewing of the foul, by washing in the laver of regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14. that he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jor-' dan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child. Not only is the flesh of a little child tender, but his mind is tender. A little child has his heart eafily moved, wrought upon and bowed: fo is a Christian in spiritual things. A little child is apt to be affected with sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and cannot well bear to see others in distress: so it is with a Christian; John xi- 35. Rom, xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26. little child is easily won by kindness: so is a Christian. A little child is easily affected with grief at temporal evils, and has his heart melted, and falls a-weeping: thus tender is the heart of a Christian, with regard to the evil of fin. A little child is eafily affrighted at the appearance of outward evils, or anything that threatens its hurt: fo is a Christian apt to be alarmed at the appearance of moral evil, and any thing that threatens the hurt of the foul. A little child, when it meets enemies, or fierce bealts, is not apt to trust its own strength. but flies to its parents for refuge: so a faint is not selfconfident in engaging spiritual enemies, but flies to Christ. A little child is apt to be suspicious of evil in places of danger, afraid in the dark, afraid when left alone, or far from home: so is a saint apt to be sensible of his spiritual dangers, jealous of himself, full of fear when he cannot fee his way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a distance from God; Prov. xxviii. 14. Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' A little child is apt to be afraid of superiors, and to dread their anger, and tremble at their frowns and threatenings: fo is a true faint with respect to God, Psal. exix.;

afraid of thy judgments, Is. lxvi. 2. To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my word, ver. 5. Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Ezra ix. 4. Then were affembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Ifrael. Chap. x. 3. According to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God.' A little child approaches superiors with awe: so do the saints approach God with holy awe and reverence; Job xiii. 2. Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you? Holy fear is so much the nature of true godliness, that it is called in scripture by no other name more frequently, than the fear of God.

Hence gracious affections do not tend to make menbold, forward, noify and boisterous; but rather to speak, trembling; Hos. xiii. 1. 'When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died);' and to clothe with a kind of holy fear in all their behaviour towards God and man; agreeable to Pfal. ii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 15. 2: Cor. vii. 15. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 2. Rom. xi. 20.

But here some may object and say, is there no such thing as a holy boldness in prayer, and the duties of divine worship? I answer, there is doubtless such a thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent faints, perfons of great degrees of faith and love. But this holy boldness is not in the least opposite to reverence; though it be to disunion and servility. It abolishes or lessens that: disposition which arises from moral distance or alienation; and also distance of relation, as that of a slave: but not at all, that which becomes the natural distance, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No boldness in poor finful worms of the dust, that have a right fight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less fear and reverence, than spotless and glorious angels in heaven, who cover their faces before his throne, If, vi. at the beginning. Rebec-

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ca, (who in her marriage with Isaac, in almost all its circumstances, was manifestly a great type of the church, the spoule of Christ), when she meets Isaac, lights off from her camel, and takes a vail, and covers herfelf; although the was brought to him as his bride, to be with him, in the nearest relation, and most intimate union, that mankind are ever united one to another in +. Elijah, that great prophet, who had fo much holy familiarity with God, at a time of special nearness to God, even when he converfed with him in the mount, wrapped his face in his mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any fervile fear, by the terrible wind. and earthquake, and fire; but after thefe were all over, and God spake to him as a friend, in a still small voice: 1 Kings xix. 12. 13. ' And after the fire, a still fmall voice; and it was fo, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle.' And Moses, with whom God spake face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and was distinguished from all the prophets, in the familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a time when he was brought nearest of all, when God flewed him his glory in that fame mount where he afterwards spake to Elijah, 'He made haste, and bowed' his head towards the earth, and worshipped, Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in some persons a most unsuitable and unsufferable boldness, in their addresses to the great Jehovah, in an affectation of an holy boldness, and oftentation of eminent nearness and familiarity; the very thoughts of which would make them shrink into nothing, with horror and confusion, if they faw the diftance that is between God and them. They are like the Pharifee, that boldly came up near, in a confidence of his own eminency in holiness. Whereas, if they faw their vileness, they would be more like the publican, that ' stood afar off; and durst not so much as · lift:

[†] Dr Ames, in his Cases of Conscience, Book III. chap. . iv. speaks of an holy modesty in the worship of God, as one sign of true humility.

breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner: It becomes such sinful creatures as we, to approach a holy God (although with faith, and without terror, yet) with contrition, and penitent shame and consusion of face. It is foretold that this should be the disposition of the church, in the time of her highest privileges on earth, in her latter day of glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing his covenantmercy to her; Ezek. xvi. 60. to the end. I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed.

And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou fhalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayst re-

member and be confounded, and never open thy
mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pa-

cified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the

Lord God.' The woman that we read of in the viith chapter of Luke, that was an eminent faint, and had much of that true love which casts out fear, by Christ's own testimony, ver. 47. she approached Christ in an amiable, and acceptable manner, when she came with that humble modesty, reverence and shame, when she stood at his feet, weeping behind him, as not being sit to appear before his face, and washed his feet with her tears.

One reason why gracious affections are attended with this tenderness of spirit which has been spoken of, is, that true grace tends to promote convictions of confcience. Persons are wont to have convictions of confcience before they have any grace: and if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true repentance, and joy, and peace in believing; this has a tendency to put an end to terrors, but has no tendency to put an end to convictions of sin, but to increase them. It does not stupify a man's conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater conviction of the heinous and dreadful nature of sin, susceptive of a quicker and deeper sense of it, and more convinced

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of his own finfulness, and wickedness of his heart; and consequently it has a tendency to make him more jealous of his heart. Grace tends to give the foul a further and better conviction of the fame things concerning fin, that it was convinced of under a legal work of the Spirit of God; viz. its great contrariety to the will, and law, and honour of God, the greatness of God's hatred of it, and displeasure against it, and the dreadful punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only fo, but it convinces the foul of fomething further concerning fin, that it faw nothing of, while only under legal convictions; and that is the infinitely hateful nature of fin, and its dreadfulness upon that account. And this makes the heart tender with respect to fin; like David's heart, that fmote him, when he had cut off Saul's skirt. The heart of a true penitent is like a burnt child that dreads the fire. Whereas on the contrary, he that has had a counterfeit repentance, and false comforts and joys, is like iron that has been suddenly heat and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false conversion puts an end to convictions of conscience; and so either takes away, or much diminishes that confcientiousness, which was manifested under a work of the law.

All gracious affections have a tendency to promote this Christian tenderness of heart, that has been spoken of: not only a godly forrow, but also a gracious joy: Psal. ii. 11. 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice 'with trembling.' As also a gracious hope, Psal. xxxiii. 18. 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon 'them that fear him; upon them that hope in his mer'cy.' And Psal. cxlvii. 11. 'The Lord taketh plea'fure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his 'mercy.' Yea, the most consident and assured hope, that is truly gracious, has this tendency. The higher an holy hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian tenderness. The banishing of a service fear, by a holy assurance, is attended with a proportionable increase of a reverential fear. The diminishing of the fear of

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the fruits of God's displeasure in future punishment, is attended with a proportionable increase of fear of his displeasure itself; the diminishing of the fear of hell, with an increase of the fear of fin. The vanishing of jealousies of the person's state, is attended with a proportionable increase of jealousy of his heart, in a distrust of its strength, wisdom, stability, faithfulness, &c. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural evil, having his heart fixed in trulting in God, and fo, not afraid of evil tidings; the more apt he is to be alarmed with the appearance of moral evil, or the evil of sin. As he has more holy boldness, so he has less of felf-confidence, and a forward assuming boldness, and more modelty. As he is more fure than others of deliverance from hell, fo he has more of a fense of the defert of it. He is less apt than others to be shaken in faith; but more apt than others to be moved with folemn warnings, and with God's frowns, and with the calamities of others. He has the firmest comfort, but the foftest heart: richer than others, but poorest of all in spirit: the tallest and strongest saint, but the least and tenderest child among them.

X. Another thing wherein those affections that are struly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false,

is beautiful symmetry and proportion.

Not that the symmetry of the virtues, and gracious affections of the saints, in this life is perfect: it oftentimes is in many things defective, through the imperfection of grace, for want of proper instructions, through terrors in judgment, or some particular unhappiness of natural temper, or defects in education, and many other disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wife, that monstruous disproportion in gracious affections, and the various parts of true religion in the saints, that is very commonly to be observed, in the false religion, and counterfeit graces of hypocrites.

In the truly holy affections of the faints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their fanctification. They have the whole

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whole image of Christ upon them: they have put off the old man, and have put on the new man entire in all its parts and members. It bath pleafed the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell: there is in him every grace; he is full of grace and truth: and they that are Christ's, do ' of his fulness receive grace for grace; (John i. 14. 16.) i. e. there is every grace in them, which is in Christ: grace for grace; that is, grace anfwerable to grace: there is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it: the image is a true image; and there is fomething of the same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original; there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is fymmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body, which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: fo it is in the new man, confifting of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through diffemper, and the weakness and wounds of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those that are born monsters.

It is with hypocrites, as it was with Ephraim of old, at a time when God greatly complains of their hypocrify; Hof. vii. 'Ephraim is a cake not turned,' half roafted and half raw: there is commonly no manner

of uniformity in their affections.

There is in many of them a great partiality, with regard to the feveral kinds of religious affections; great affections in some things, and no manner of proportion in others. An holy hope and holy sear go together in the faints, as has been observed from Pial. xxxiii. 18. and cxlvii. 11. But in some of these is the most consident hope, while they are void of reverence, self-jealoufy and caution, to a great degree cast off sear. In the saints, joy and holy sear go together, though the joy be never so great: as it was with the disciples, in that joyful morning of Christ's resurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with

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fear and great joy *. But many of these rejoice without trembling: their joy is of that fort, that it is

truly opposite to godly fear.

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But particularly, one great difference between faints and hypocrites is this, that the joy and comfort of the former is attended with godly forrow and mourning for They have not only forrow to prepare them for their first comfort, but after they are comforted, and their joy established. As it is foretold of the church of God, that they should mourn and loath themselves for their fins, after they were returned from the captivity, and were fettled in the land of Canaan, the land of rest, and the land that flows with milk and honey, Ezek. xx. 42. 43. ' And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I 4 shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to 4 your fathers. And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been de-4 filed, and ye shall loath yourselves in your own fight, for all your evils that ye have committed,' As also in Ezek. xvi. 61. 62, 63. A true faint is like a little child in this respect; he never had any godly forrow before he was born again; but fince has it often in exercife: as a little child, before it is born, and while it remains in darkness, never cries; but as foon as ever it fees the light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ hath borne our griefs, and carried our forrows, so that we are freed from the forrow of punishment, and may now sweetly feed upon the comforts Christ hath purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these comforts should be attended with the forrow of repentance. As of old, the children of Israel were commanded, evermore to Gg feed

* "Renewed care and diligence follows the fealings of the Spirit. Now is the foul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, with fear and great joy. He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is asraid of a thief in every bush." Flavel's Sacramental Meditations, Med. 4.

feed upon the paschal lamb, with bitter herbs *. True saints are spoken of in scripture, not only as those that have mourned for sin, but as those that do mourn, whose manner it is still to mourn; Matth. v. 4. 'Blested are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'

* " If repentance accompanies faith, it is no prefumption to believe. Many know the fin, and hence believe in Christ, trust in Christ, and there is an end of their faith. But what confession and sorrow for sin? what more love to Christ follows this faith? Truly none. Nay, their faith is the cause why they have none. For they think, if I trust in Christ to forgive me, he will do it; and there is an end of the business. Verily this hedge-faith, this bramble-faith, that catches hold on Chrift, and pricks and scratches Christ, by more impenitency, more contempt of him, is mere prefumption; which shall one day be burnt up and destroyed by the fire of God's jealousy. Fy upon that faith, that serves only to keep a man from being tormented be-fore his time! Your fins would be your forrows, but that your faith quiets you. But if faith be accompanied with repentance, mourning for fin, more efteem of God's grace in Christ; so that nothing breaks thy heart more than the thoughts of Christ's unchangeable love to one so vile, and this love makes thee love much, and love him the more; as thy fin increaseth, so thou defirest thy love's increase; and now the stream of thy thoughts run, how thou mayst live to him that died for thee: this was Mary's faith, who sat at Christ's feet weeping, washing them with her tears, and loving much, because much was forgiven." Shepard's Sound Believer, p. 128. 129.

"You shall know godly forrow (says Dr Preston, in his discourse on Paul's conversion) by the continuance of it; it is constant: but worldly forrow is but a passion of the mind; it changes, it lasts not. Though for the present it may be violent and strong, and work much outwardly; yet it comes but by fits, and continues not: like a land-slood, which violently, for the present, overslows the banks: but it will away again; it is not always thus. But godly forrow is like a spring, that still keeps his running both winter and summer, wet and dry, in heat and cold, early and late. So this godly forrow is the same in a regenerate man still: take him when you will, he is still forrowing for sin. This

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Not only is there often in hypocrites an effential deficiency as to the various kinds of religious affections, but also a strange partiality and disproportion, in the same affections, with regard to different objects.

Thus as to the affection of love, some make high pretences, and a great shew of love to God and Christ, and it may be have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: but they have not a spirit of love and benevolence towards men. but are disposed to contention, envy, revenge, and evilfpeaking; and will, it may be, fuffer an old grudge to rest in their bosoms towards a neighbour, for seven years together, if not twice feven years; living in real ill-will and bitterness of spirit towards him: and it may be in their dealings with their neighbours, are not very strict and conscientious in observing the rule of ' doing to others, as they would that they should do to them: I John iv. 20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath feen, how can he love God ' whom he hath not feen?' And, on the other hand, there are others, that appear as if they had a great deal of benevolence to men, are very good-natured and generous in their way, but have no love to God.

And as to love to men, there are some that have slowing affections to some; but their love is far from being of so extensive and universal a nature, as a truly Christian love is. They are full of dear affections to some, and sull of bitterness towards others. They are knit to their own party, them that approve of them,

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godly forrow flands like the centre of the earth, which removes not, but still remains."

"I am persuaded, many a man's heart is kept from breaking and mourning, because of this. He saith (it may be) that he is a vile sinner; but I trust in Christ, &c. If they do go to Christ to destroy their sin, this makes them more secure in their sin. For (say they) I cannot help it, and Christ must do all. Whereas saith makes the soul mourn after the Lord the more." Shepard's Parable of the ten virgins, Part II. p. 168.

love them and admire them; but are fierce against those that oppose and dislike them. Matth. v. 45. 46. Be like your Father, which is in heaven; for he maketh his fun to rife on the evil and on the good.—For if ye "love them which love you, what reward have ye? do " not even the publicans the fame?" Some shew a great affection to their neighbours, and pretend to be ravished with the company of the children of God abroad; and at the same time are uncomfortable and churlish towards their wives and other near relations at home, and are very negligent of relative duties. And as to the great love to finners and oppofers of religion, and the great concern for their fouls, that there is an appearance of in fome, even to extreme diffress and agony, fingling out a particular person, from among a multitude, for its object, there being at the same time no general compassion to sinners, that are in equally miserable circumstances, but what is in a monstrous disproportion; this feems not to be of the nature of a gracious affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that pity to the perishing fouls of sinners should be to a degree of agony, if other things are answerable: or that a truly gracious compassion to souls should be exercifed much more to some persons than others that are equally miserable, especially on some particular occafions: there may many things happen to fix the mind, and affect the heart, with respect to a particular person, at fuch a juncture; and without doubt fome faints have been in great distress for the fouls of particular perfons, so as to be as it were in travail for them; but when persons appear, at particular times, in wracking agonies for the foul of some single person, far beyond what has been usually heard or read of in eminent faints, but appear to be persons that have a spirit of meek and fervent love, charity, and compassion to mankind in general, in a far less degree than they: I say, fuch agonies are greatly to be suspected, for reasons already given; viz. that the Spirit of God is wont to

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give graces and gracious affections in a beautiful sym-

metry and proportion.

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And as there is a monstrous disproportion in the love of some, in its exercises towards different persons, fo there is in their feeming exercises of love towards the fame persons. Some men shew a love to others as to their outward man, they are liberal of their worldly fubltance, and often give to the poor; but have no love to, or concern for the fouls of men. Others pretend a great love to men's fouls, that are not compassionate and charitable towards their bodies. The making a great thew of love, pity, and diffress for fouls, costs them nothing; but in order to shew mercy to men's bodies, they must part with money out of their pockets. But a true Christian love to our brethren extends both to their fouls and bodies; and herein is like the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. He shewed mercy to men's fouls, by labouring for them in preaching the gospel to them; and shewed mercy to their bodies, in going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. We have a remarkable instance of Christ's having compassion at once both to men's fouls and bodies, and shewing compassion by feeding both, in Mark vi. 34. &c. ' And Jesus, when he came out, faw much people, and was moved with ' compassion toward them, because they were as sheep ' not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them ' many things.' Here was his compassion to their souls. And in the fequel we have an account of his compaffion to their bodies, because they had been a long while having nothing to eat; he fed five thousand of them with five loaves and two fishes. And if the compassion of professing Christians towards others does not work in the same ways, it is a sign that it is no true Christian compassion.

And furthermore, it is a fign that affections are not of the right fort, if perfons feem to be much affected with the bad qualities of their fellow-Christians, as the coldness and lifelessness of other faints, but are in no

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proportion affected with their own defects and corruptions. A true Christian may be affected with the coldness and unsavouriness of other saints, and may mourn much over it: but at the same time, he is not so apt to be affected with the badness of any body's heart, as his own; this is most in his view; this he is most quick-sighted to discern; this he sees most of the aggravations of, and is most ready to cry out of. And a lesser deree of virtue will bring him to pity himself, and be concerned at his own calamities, than rightly to be affected with others calamities. And if men have not attained to the less, we may determine they

never attained to the greater.

And here by the way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general rule, that if persons pretend that they come to high attainments in religion, but have never yet arrived to the leffer attainments, it is a fign of a vain pretence. As if persons pretend, that they have got beyond mere morality, to live a spiritual and divine life; but really have not come to be so much as moral persons: or pretend to be greatly affected with the wickedness of their hearts, and are not affected with the palpable violations of God's commands in their practice, which is a leffer attainment: or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the glory of God, but have no forwardness to suffer a little in their estates and names, and worldly convenience, for the fake of their duty; or pretend that they are not afraid to venture their fouls upon Christ, and commit their all to God, trusting to his bare word, and the faithfulness of his promises, for their eternal welfare; but at the fame time, have not confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their estates, bestowed to pious and charitable uses; I say, when it is thus with perfons, their pretences are manifelly vain. He that is in a journey, and imagines he has got far beyond fuch a place in his road, and never vet came to it, must be mistaken; and he is not yet arrived to the top of the hill, that never yet got half-way thither. But this by the way.

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The fame that has been observed of the affection of love, is also to be observed of other religious affections. Those that are true, extend in some proportion to the various things that are their due and proper objects; but when they are falle, they are commonly strangely disproportionate. So it is with religious defires and longings: these in the faints, are to those things that are spiritual and excellent in general, and that in some proportion to their excellency, importance or necessity, or their near concern in them; but in false longings it is often far otherwise. They will strangely run, with an impatient vehemence, after fomething of less importance, when other things of greater importance are neglected. Thus for instance, some persons, from time to time, are attended with a vehement inclination, and unaccountably violent preffure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is, at the fame time, no inclination, in any measure equal to it, to other things, that true Christianity has as great, yea, a greater tendency to; as the pouring out the foul before God in secret earnest prayer and praise to him, and more conformity to him, and living more to his glory, &c. We read in scripture of ' groanings that cannot be ' urtered, and foul-breakings for the longing it hath, ' and longings, thirstings, and pantings,' much more frequently to these latter things, than the former.

And so as to hatred and zeal; when these are from right principles, they are against sin in general, in some proportion to the degree of sinfulness; Psal. cxix. 104. I hate every salse way.' So ver. 128. But a salse hatred and zeal against sin, is against some particular sin only. Thus some seem to be very zealous against profaneness, and pride in apparel, who themselves are notorious for covetousness, closeness, and it may be backabiting, envy towards superiors, turbulency of spirit towards rulers, and rooted ill-will to them that have injured them. False zeal is against the sins of others, while men have no zeal against their own sins. But he that has true zeal, exercises it chiefly against his own

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fins; though he shews also a proper zeal against prevailing and dangerous iniquity in others. And some pretend to have a great abhorrence of their own fins of heart, and cry out much of their inward corruption; and yet make light of sins in practice, and seem to commit them without much restraint or remorse; though

these imply sin both in heart and life.

As there is a much greater disproportion in the exercifes of falfe affections than of true, as to different objects, so there is also, as to different times. For although true Christians are not always alike; yea, there is very great difference, at different times, and the best have reason to be greatly ashamed of their unsteadiness; yet there is no wife that instability and inconstancy in the hearts of those who are true virgins, ' that follow the 'Lamb whitherfoever he goeth,' which is in falsehearted professors. The righteous man is truly said to be one whose heart is fixed, trusting in God, (Pfal. exil. 7.), and to have his heart effablished with grace, (Heb. xiii. 9.), and to hold on his way, Job xvii. 9. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath 'clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger.' It is spoken of as a note of the hypocrify of the Jewish church, that they were as a fwift dromedary, traverling her ways.

If therefore persons are religious only by fits and starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the clouds in their affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all, and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their manner of carrying on religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in religion, only in extraordinary seasons, in the time of a remarkable out-pouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon dispensation of providence, or upon the real or supposed receipt of some great mercy, when they have received some extraordinary temporal mercy, or suppose that they are newly converted, or have lately had what they call a great discovery; but quickly return to such a frame, that their hearts are chiefly upon other things,

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and the prevailing bent of their hearts and stream of their affections is ordinarily towards the things of this world; when they are like the children of Ifrael in the wilderness, who had their affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red Sea, and fang his praise, and soon fell a lusting after the slesh-pots of Egypt; but then again when they came to mount Sinai, and faw the great manifestations God made of himfelf there, feemed to be greatly engaged again, and mightily forward to enter into covenant with God, faying, 'All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient,' but then quickly made them a golden calf; I fay, when it is thus with persons, it is a fign of the unfoundness of affections t. They are like the waters

+ Dr. Owen (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. ii, fect. 18.) speaking of a common work of the Spirit, says, " This work operates greatly on the affections: we have given instances, in fear, forrow, joy, and delight, about spiritual things, that are stirred up and acted thereby: but yet it comes short in two things, of a thorough work upon the affections themselves. For, 1st, It doth not fix them. And adly, It doth not fill them. 1. It is required that our affections be fixed on heavenly and spiritual things: and true grace will effect it; Col. iii. 1. 2. " If ye be risen with 'Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ fitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above." The joys, the fears, the hopes, the forrows, with reference unto spiritual and eternal things, which the work before mentioned doth produce, are evanid, uncertain, unflable, not only as to the degrees, but as to the very being of them. Sometimes they are as a river ready to overflow its banks, men cannot but be pouring them out on all occasions; and sometimes as waters that fail, no drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, and fometimes cold; fometimes up and fometimes down; fometimes all heaven, and fometimes all world; without equality, without stability. But true grace fixeth the affections on spiritual things. As to the degrees of their exercise; there may be, and is in them a great variety, according as they may be excited, aided, affifted by grace and the means of it; or obstructed and impeded, by the interpolition of temptations and diversions. But the constant bent and inclination of re-

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waters in the time of a shower of rain, which during the shower, and a little after, run like a brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry: and when another shower comes, then they will flow again, Whereas a true faint is like a stream from a living fpring; which though it may be greatly increased by a shower of rain, and diminished in time of drought, yet constantly runs: (John iv. 14. 'The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up,' &c.): or like a tree planted by such a stream, that has a constant supply at the root, and is always green, even in time of the greatest drought; Jer. xvii. 7. 8. ' Bleffed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease ' from yielding fruit.' Many hypocrites are like comets that appear for a while with a mighty blaze; but

newed affections, is unto spiritual things; as the scripture every where testifieth, and as experience doth confirm."

"There is (fays Dr Prefton) a certain love, by fits, which God accepts not; when men come and offer to God great promises, like the waves of the sea, as big as mountains: Oh, they think, they will do much for God! But their minds change; and they become as those high waves, which at last fall level with the other waters. If a man should proffer thee great kindnesses; and thou shouldstafter-wards come to him to make use of him, and he should look strangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with thee; how wouldst thou esteem of such love? If we are now on, now off, in our love, God will not esteem of such love." Discourse on the divine love of Christ.

Mr Flavel, speaking of these changeable professors, says, these professors have more of the moon than of the sun; little light, less heat, and many changes. They deceive many, yea, they deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. They want that ballast and establishment in themselves, that would have kept them tight and steady."

Touchstone of fincerity, chap. ii. fect. 2.

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are very unsteady and irregular in their motion, (and are therefore called wandering stars, Jude 13), and their blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great while. But the true saints are like the fixed stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are stedsast in their orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant light. Hypocritical affections are like a violent motion; like that of the air that is moved with winds, (Jude 12.) But gracious affections are more a natural motion; like the stream of a river, which, though it has many turns hither and thither, and may meet with obstacles, and run more freely and swiftly in some places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant course, tends the same way, until it gets to the ocean.

And as there is a strange unevenness and disproportion in false affections, at different times; so there often is in different places, Some are greatly affected from time to time, when in company; but have nothing that bears any manner of proportion to it, in secret, in close meditation, secret prayer, and conversing with God, when alone, and separated from all the world. A

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† "The Lord is neglected fecretly, yet honoured openly; because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails; and therefore there they stand still. Hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection. They have by the one a name to live, (and that is enough), though their hearts be dead. And hence so long as you love and commend them, so long they love you; but if not, they will forsake you. They were warm only by another's fire, and hence having no principle of life within, soon grow dead. This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill." Shepard's Parable, Part J. p. 180.

Shepard's Parable, Part J. p. 180.

"The hypocrite (fays Mr Flavel) is not for the closet, but the fynagogue, Matth. vi. 5. 6. It is not his meat and drink to retire from the clamour of the world, to enjoy God in fecret." Touchstone of fincerity, Chap. vii. sect. 2.

Dr Ames, in his Cases of conscience, Lib. III. Chap. v. speaks of it as a thing by which sincerity may be known, That persons be obedient in the absence, as well as in the presence of lookers on; in secret, as well, yea more than in spublic; alledging Phil. ii. 12. and Matth. vi. 6.

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true Christian doubtless delights in religious fellowship, and Christian conversation, and finds much to affect his heart in it; but he also delights at times to retire from all mankind, to converse with God in solitary places. And this also has its peculiar advantages for fixing his heart, and engaging its affections. True religion difposes persons to be much alone, in solitary places, for holy meditation and prayer. So it wrought in Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 62. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How aften do we read of his retiring into mountains and folicary places, for holy converse with his Father? It is difficult to conceal great affections, but yet gracious affections are of a much more filent and secret nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious forrow of the faints. So it is with their forrow for their own fins +. Thus the future gracious mourning of true penitents, at the beginning of the latter-day glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the companions of their bosom; Zech. xii. 12. 13. 14. 'And the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their ' wives apart: the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart: all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.' So it is with their forrow for the fins of others. The faints pains and travailing for the fouls of finners is chiefly in fecret places, Jer. xiii. 17. 'If ye will not hear it, my foul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall weep fore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive.' So it is with gracious joys: they are hidden manna, in this

[†] Mr Flavel, in reckoning up those things, wherein the forrow of faints is distinguished from the sorrow of hypocrites, about their sins, says, "their troubles for sin are more private and silent troubles than others are; their fore runs in the night." Touchstone of sincerity, Chap, vi. sect. 5.

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this respect, as well as others, Rev. ii. 17. The Pfalmist seems to speak of his sweetest comforts, as those that were to be had in fecret, Pfal. Ixiii. 5. 6. My foul shall be fatisfied as with marrow and fatness; and " my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I ' remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.' Christ calls forth his spouse, away from the world, into retired places, that he may give her his sweetest love, Cant. vii. 11. 12. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge ' in the villages :- there I will give thee my loves.' The most eminent divine favours that the faints obtained, that we read of in scripture, were in their retirement. The principal manifestations that God made of himself, and his covenant-mercy to Abraham, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his history. Isaac received that special gift of God to him, Rebekah, who was so great a comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promifed feed, walking alone, meditating in the field. Jacob was retired for fecret prayer, when Christ came to him, and he wrestled with him, and obtained the bleffing. God revealed himself to Moses in the bush, when he was in a folitary place in the defert, in Mount Horeb, Exod. iii. at the beginning. And afterwards, when God shewed him his glory, and he was admitted to the highest degree of communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the fame mountain, and continued there forty days and forty nights, and then came down with his face shining. God came to those great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, and converfed freely with them, chiefly in their retire-Elijah conversed alone with God at mount Sinai, as Moses did. And when Jesus Christ had his greatest prelibation of his future glory, when he was transfigured; it was not when he was with the multitude, or with the twelve disciples, but retired into a solitary place in a mountain, with only three felect disciples, charging them that they should tell no man, until

he was rifen from the dead. When the angel Gabriel came to the bleffed virgin, and when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the highest over shadowed her, she feems to have been alone, and to be in this matter hid from the world; her nearest and dearest earthly friend Joseph, that had betrothed her, (tho' a just man), knew nothing of the matter. And she that first partook of the joy of Christ's resurrection, was alone with Christ at the sepulchre, John xx. And when the beloved disciple was favoured with those wonderful visions of Christ, and his future diffensations towards the church and the world, he was alone in the isle of Patmos. Not but that we have also instances of great privileges that the faints have received when with others; or that there is not much in Christian converfation, and focial and public worship, tending greatly to refresh and rejoice the hearts of the faints. But this is all that I aim at by what has been faid, to shew that it is the nature of true grace, that however it loves Christian fociety in its place, yet it in a peculiar manner delights in retirement, and fecret converse with God. So that if persons appear greatly engaged in social religion, and but little in the religion of the closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their religion.

XI. Another great and very distinguishing difference between gracious affections and others is, that gracious affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of soul after spiritual attainments increased. On the contrary, salse affections rest satisfied in themselves t.

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† "Truly there is no work of Christ that is right, (fays Mr Shepard), but it carries the foul to long for more of it." Parable of the ten virgins, Part I. p. 136.

And again, "There is in true grace an infinite circle: a man by thirsting receives, and receiving thirsts for more.

The more a true faint loves God with a gracious love, the more he defires to love him, and the more uneafy is he at his want of love to him; the more he hates fin, the more he defires to hate it, and laments that he has fo much remaining love to it: the more he mourns for hn, the more he longs to mourn for fin; the more his heart is broke, the more he defires it should be broke: the more he thirsts and longs after God and holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very foul in longings after God: the kindling and raifing of gracious affections is like kindling a flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and feek to burn. So that the spiritual appetite after holiness, and an increase of holy affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in holiness, than others; and more when grace and holy affections are in their most lively exercise, than at other times. It is as much the nature of one that is spiritually new-born, to thirst after growth in holiness, as it is the nature of a new-born babe, to thirst after the mother's breast; who has the sharpest appetite, when best in health; I Pet. ii. 2. 3. 'As new-born habes desire the sincere " milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if fo be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: The most that the saints have in this world, is but a take,

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But hencethe Spiritis not poured out abundantly on churches; because men shut it out, by shutting in, and contenting them-felves with their common graces and gists; Matth. vii. 29.

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Examine if it be not so." Ibid. p. 182.

And in p. 210. he says, This I say, True grace, as it comforts, so it never fills, but puts an edge on the appetite: more of that grace, Lord! Thus Paul, Phil. iii. 13. 14.

Thus David, "Out of my poverty I have given, &c."

I Chron. xxix. 3. 17. 18. It is a sure way never to be deceived in lighter strokes of the Spirit, to be thankful for any, but to be content with no measure of it. And this cuts the thread of difference, between a superficial lighter stroke of the Spirit, and that which is found."

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a prelibation of that future glory which is their proper fulness; it is only an earnest of their future inheritance in their hearts; 2 Cor. i. 22. and v. 5. and Eph. i. 14. The most eminent saints in this state are but children, compared with their future, which is their proper state of maturity and perfection; as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. 11. The greatest eminency and perfection, that the saints arrive to in this world, has no tendency to satiety, or to abate their desires after more; but, on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the apostle's words, Phil. iii. 13. 14. 15. Forgetting those things which are hind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark.—Let us therefore,

as many as be perfect, be thus minded.'

The reasons of it are, that the more persons have of holy affections, the more they have of that spiritual rafte which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the excellency, and relish the divine sweetness of holinefs. And the more grace they have, while in this state of imperfection, the more they see their imperfection and emptiness, and distance from what ought to be; and fo the more do they fee their need of grace; as I shewed at large before, when speaking of the nature of evangelical humiliation. And befides, grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing nature, and in a growing state. And we see it to be so with all living things, that while they are in a flate of imperfection, and in their growing state. their nature feeks after growth; and fo much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the cry of every true grace, is like that cry of true faith, Mark ix. 24. ' Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.' And the greater spiritual discoveries and affections the true Christian has, the more does he become an earnest beggar for grace, and spiritual food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the whe of proper means and endeavours; for true and gracious longings after holiness are no idle ineffectual de-

But here some may object and say, How is this confistent with what all allow, that spiritual enjoyments are

of a foul-fatisfying nature?

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I answer, its being so, will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been faid, if it be considered in what manner spiritual enjoyments are said to be of a foul fatisfying nature. Certainly they are not fo in that. fense, that they are of so cloying a nature, that he who has any thing of them, though but in a very imperfect degree, desires no more: But spiritual enjoyments are of a foul fatisfying nature in the following respects. 1. They in their kind and nature, are fully adapted to the nature, . capacity, and need of the foul of man. So that those who find them, defire no other kind of enjoyments; they fit down fully contented with that kind of happiness which they have, desiring no change, not inclining to wander about any more, faying, ' Who will shew us : any good?" the foul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its powers, to this happiness. But not that those who have something of this happiness, desire no more of the same, 2. They are fatisfying also in this respect, that they answer the expectation of the appetite. When the appetite is high. to any thing, the expectation is confequently fo. Ap. petite to a particular object, implies expectation in its This expectation is not fatisfied by worldly enjoyments, the man expected to have a great accession of happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual enjoyments; they fully answer and satisfy the expectation. 3. The gratification and pleasure of spiritual enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with. worldly enjoyments. They in a fense fatisfy particular appetites: but the appetite, in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the pleasure is over: and as soon as that is .. over, the general appetite of human nature after happinels returns; but is empty, and without any thing to latisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular appetite. Hh 3. Service Con

neral thirst of nature. 4. Spiritual good is satisfying, as there is enough in it to satisfy the soul, as to degree, if obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying faculty duly applied. There is room enough here for the soul to extend itself; here is an infinite ocean of it. If men be not satisfied here, in degree of happiness, the cause is with themselves; it is because they do not open

their mouths wide enough.

But thefe things do not argue that a foul has no appetite excited after more of the same, that has rasted a little; or that his appetite will not increase, the more he taftes, until he comes to fulness of enjoyment: as bodies that are attracted to the globe of the earth, tend: to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the centre. rual good is of a fatisfying nature; and for that very reason, the foul that tastes, and knows its nature, will! thirst after it, and a fulness of it, that it may be fatisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquifite, and fatiffying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affection, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holinels.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great defire, of some fort, after grace; as these affections rise, that defire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, and faith in Christ, and love to God: but now, when these salse affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him consident that he is converted, and his state good, there are no more earnest longings after light, and grace; for his end is answered; he is consident that his sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to

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heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false affections are raised very high, do they put an end to longings after grace and holiness. The man now is far from appearing to himself a poor empty creature; on the contrary, he is rich, and increased with goods, and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent than what he has already attained to.

Hence there is an end to many persons earnestness in seeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their conversion; or at least, after they have had those high affections, that make them sully consident of it. Before, while they looked upon themselves as in a state of nature, they were engaged in seeking; after God and Christ, and cried earnestly for grace, and strove in the use of means: but now they act as though they thought their work was done; they live upon their first work, or some high experiences that are past; and there is an end to their crying, and striving after God; and grace to Whereas the holy principles that actuate

a true:

† It is usual to see a false heart most diligent in seeking the Lord, when he has been worst, and most careless when it is best. Hence many at first conversion sought the Lord earnestly: afterwards affections and endeavours die; that now they are as good as the word can make them.—An hypocrite's last end is to satisfy himself: hence he has enough, A saint's is to satisfy Christ: hence he never has enough.' Shepard's Parable, Part 1. p. 157;

"Many a man, it may be, may say, I have nothing in myfelf, and all is in Chrift; and comfort himself there; and so falls afleep. Hands off! and touch not this ark, lest the Lord slay thee: a Christ of clouts would serve your turn as:

well." Ibid: p. 72.

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"An hypocrite's light goes out, and grows not. Hence many ancient standers take all then comfort from their first.

work, and droop when in old a e." Ibid. p. 77.

And p. 93. 94. Mr. Shepard, mentioning the chan

And p. 93. 94. Mr. Shepard, mentioning the characters of those that have a dead hope, says, "They that content themselves with any measure of holiness and grace, they look not for Christ's coming and company. For faints that look for him, though they have not that holiness and grace they

wirue saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than fervile

they would have, yet they rest not satisfied with any meafure: I John iii. 3. He that hath this hope purisheth himfels as he is pure. — The saints content not themselves
with any dressings, until made glorious; and so fit for sellowship with that spouse. — When a man leaves not, until he gets such a measure of faith and grace, and now when
he has got this, contents himself with this, as a good sign
that he shall be saved, he looks not for Christ. Or when
men are heavily laden with sin; then close with Christ; and
then are comforted, sealed, and have joy that fills them;
and now the work is done. — And when men shall not content themselves with any measure; but wish they had more,
if grace would grow, while they tell clocks and sit idle;
and so God must do all; but do not purge themselves and
make work of it."

Again, p. 109. "There is never a hypocrite living, but closeth with Christ for his own ends: for he cannot work beyond his principle. Now when men have served their own turns out of another man, away they go; and keep that which they have. An hypocrite closeth with Christ, as a man with a rich shop; he will not be at cost to buy all the shop, but so much as serves his turn. Commonly men in horror, seek so much of Christ as will ease them; and hence profess, and hence seek for so much of Christ as will credit them; and hence their desires after Christ are soon satisfied. Appetitus sinis est infinitus."

"Wo to thee that canst paint such a Christin thy head, and receive such a C' ist into thy heart, as must be a pander to your sloth —Why what can we do? what can we do?—Why as the first Ad m conveys not only guilt but power; so the second conveys both righteousness and strength." Ibid. p 158.

"When the Lord hath given some light and affection, and some comfort and some reformation, now a man grows full here. Saints do for God; and carnal hearts do something too; but a little fills them and quiets them, and so danns them. And hence men at the first work upon them, are very diligent in the use of means; but after that, they be brought to neglect prayer, sleep out sermons, and to be careless, sapless. lifeless." Ibid. p. 210.

to himself, as the glutton said to his soul, Take thy rest, for

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Hence feeking God is spoken of as one fervile fear. of the diffinguishing characters of the saints; and those that feek God, is one of the names by which the godly are called in scripture; Pfal. xxiv. 6. 'This is the generation of them that feek him, that feek thy face, O Pfal. lxix. 6. Let not those that feek thee, · Jacob. be confounded for my fake. ver. 32. The humble * shall see this and be glad: and your heart shall live ' that feek God. And lxx. 4. Let all those that feek ' thee, rejoice, and be glad in thee: and let fuch as love thy falvation fay continually, The Lord be magnified." And the scriptures every where represent the seeking, striving, and labour of a Christian, as being chiefly after his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work. And almost all that is faid in the New Testament, of mens watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set beforethem, striving, and agonizing, wrestling not with slesh: and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armour of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sinners seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange antiscriptural way, of having all their striving and wrestling over before they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to fit down and enjoy their floth. and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord

thou hast goods laid up for many years. So thou hast repentance and grace, and peace enough for many years: and hence the foul takes its rest, grows sluggish and negligent. Oh, if you die in this case, this night thy soul shall be taken away to hell." Ibid. p. 227. Lord 'fills the hungry with good things, these rich are

" like to be fent away empty,' Luke i. 53

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only false affections, who will think they are able : stand this trial; and will readily fay, that they defire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward, they do desire more, they long after God and Christ, and desire more holiness, and do feek But the truth is, their defires are not properly the defires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it; but only for by-ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better fatisfied about the state of their fouls; or because in great discoveries self is gratified, in being made fo much of by God, and fo exalted above others; they long to taste the love of God, (as they call it), more than to have more love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind of forced, fancied or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwife it will be a dark fign upon them. But fuch things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man, after God and holiness. There is an inward burning defire that a faint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or fanctification is more directly the object of it; than any manifestation of God's love and favour. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite; John iv. 34. · My meat is to do the will of him that fent me, and to finish his work.' Where we read in scripture of the defires, longings, and thirstings of the faints, righteoufness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing elfe. The faints defire the fincere milk of the word, not so much to testify God's love to them, as that they may grow thereby in holiness. I have shewn before, that holiness

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ow lefs is is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual taste, is also the chief object of a spiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treasure; Is. xxxiii 6. 'The sear of the Lord is his 'treasure.' Godliness is the gain that he is covetous and greedy of, I Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for discoveries, more for the present comfort of the discovery, and the high manifestation of God's love in it, than for any fanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great discoveries, or after great tastes of the love of God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any measure so distinguishing marks of true saints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

But I am come now to the last distinguishing mark

of holy affections that I shall mention.

XII. Gracious and holy affections have their exercife and fruit in Christian practice.—I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them, that they cause that a practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules,

should be the practice and business of his life.

This implies three things; 1. That his behaviour or practice in the world, be univerfally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. 2. That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: so that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently his work and business. And, 3. That he persists in it to the end of life: so that it may be said, not only to be his business at certain seasons, the business of Sabbath-days, or certain extraordinary times, or the business of a month, or a year, or of seven years, or his business under certain circumstances; but the business of his life; it being that business which he perse-

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The necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

dient *: 1 John iii. 3. &c. 'Every man that hath this hope

" He that pretends to godliness, and turns aside to crooked ways, is an hypocrite: for those that are really godly, do live in a way of obedience; Pfal. cxix. 1. 2. 3. Bleffed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the law of the Lord. They also do no iniquity. Luke i. 6. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blamelese. But such as live in ways of fin, are diffemblers; for all fuch will be rejected in the day of judgement, Matth. vii. 23. 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' The like we have in Luke xiii. 27. If men live in a way of disobedience, they do not love God; for love will make men keep God's commandments, I John v. 3. 'Herein is love, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. If men live in a way of disobedience, they have not a spirit of faith: for faith fanctifies men; Acts xxvi. 18. " Sanctified by faith. that is in me, If men live in a way of disobedience, they are not Christ's sheep; for his sheep hear his voice, John x. 27. Men that live in a way of disobedience are not born of God; I John in 9. 'He that is born of God, finneth "not.' Men that live in a way of disobedience are the servants of fin, John viii. 34. He that committeth fin, is the fervant of fin.' A course of external fin is an evidence of hypocrify; whether it be a fin of omission, or commission. If men live in the neglect of known duties, or in the practice of known evils, that will be their condemnation; let the fin be what it will; let it be profaneness, uncleanness, lying, or injustice. If men allow themselves in malice, envy, wanton thoughts, profane thoughts, that will condemn them; tho' thole corruptions do not break out in any scandalous way. These thoughts are an evidence of a rotten heart, Tit. iii. 3. We ourselves were sometimes foolist, disobedient, deceiv ed, ferving divers lufts and pleafures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' If a man allows himself, though he thinks he doth not, in malice and envy, he is an hypocrite: though his conscience disallows it, yet if his heart allows it, he is no faint. Some make pretences

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4 hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—
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to godliness, whereby they do not only deceive others, but (which is a great deal worse) deceive themselves also: but this will condemn them, that they live in a course of fin, and fo must go with ungodly men, Pfal. cxxv. 5. ' As for 4 fuch as turn afide unto their crooked ways, the Lord will lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. If there be a great change in a man's carriage, and he be reformed in feveral particulars, yet if there be one evil way, the man is an ungodly man: where there is piety there is univerfal obedience. A man may have great infirmities, vet be a godly man. So it was with Lot, David, and Peter: but if he lives in a way of fin, he does not render his godline's only fuspicious, but it is full evidence against him. that are godly have respect to all God's commandments, There be a great many commands, and if Pfal. cxix. 6. there be one of them that a man has not respect unto, he will be put to shame another day. If a man lives in one evil way, he is not subject to God's authority; but then he lives in rebellion; and that will take off all his pleas, and at once cut off all his pretences; and he will be condemned in the day of judgment. One way of fin is exception enough against the man's falvation. Though the fin that he lives in be but freall: fuch persons will not be guilty of perjury, flealing, drunkenness, fornication; they look upon them to be heinous things, and they are afraid of them; but they do not much matter it, if they oppress a little in a bargain, if they commend a thing too much when they are about to fell it, if they break a promile, if they spend the Sabbath unprofitably, if they neglect fecret prayer, if they talk rudely and reproach others; they think these are but fmall things: if they can keep clear of great transgression, they hope that God will not infift upon small things. But indeed all the commands of God are established by divine authority: a small shot may kill a man, as well as a cannonbullet: a small leak may fink a ship. If a man lives in small fins, that shews he has no love to God, no fincere care to please and honour God. Little sins are of a damning nature, as well as great: if they do not deferve fo much punishment as greater, yet they do deserve damna-There is a contempt of God in all fins; Matth. v. 19. ' He that shall break one of the least of these commands, and shall teach men fo, shall be called the least in the king dom of God." Proy, xix. 16. He that keepeth the com mandment,

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our fins; and in him is no fin. Whofoever abideth ' in him, finneth not : who soever finneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.—He that doth righteouf-" nefs, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth fin is of the devil. chap, v. 18. We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. John xv. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatfoever I command you. James ii. 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, ' and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 1 Cor. ' vi. 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God. Gal. v. 19. 20. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, forinication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such ' like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told ' you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Which is as much as to fay, they that do any fort of wickedness. Job xxxi. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 'Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he fee my ways, and count all my steps? Let me • be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands, &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 15. If ye walk in the statutes of life, without com-" mitting iniquity, he shall furely live." If

* mandment, keepeth his own foul; but he that despiseth his way, shall die.' If a man says, this is a great command, and so lays weight on it, and another is a little commandment, and so does not regard it, but will allow himself to break it, he is in a perishing condition." Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrify.

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If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell, Matth. v. 29. 30. Saul was commanded to flay all God's enemies, the Amalekites; and he slew all but Agag, and the faving him alive proved his ruin. Caleb and Joshua entered into God's promised rest, because they wholly followed the Lord, Numb. xiv. 24. and xxxii. 11, 12. Deut. i. 36. Josh. xiv. 6. 8. 9. 14. Naaman's hypocrify appeared in that, however he feemed to be greatly affected with gratitude to God for healing his leprofy, and engaged to ferve him, yet in one thing he defired to be excused. And Herod, though he feared John, and observed him, and heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved Herodias. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes, fins that most easily befet them, and which they are most exposed to by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As Joseph would not make known himself to his brethren, who had fold him, until Benjamin the beloved child of the family, that was most hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those that we have the greatest aversion to.

And it is of importance, that it should be observed, that in order to a man's being truly said to be universally obedient, his obedience must not only consist in negatives, or in universally avoiding wicked practices, consisting in sins of commission; but he must also be universal in the positives of religion. Sins of omission are as much breaches of God's commands, as sins of commission. Christ, in Matth. xxv. represents those on the left hand, as being condemned and cursed to everlasting fire, for sins of omission, 'I was an hun'gred, and ye gave me no meat, &c. A man there-

fore cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian conversation, only because he is no thies, nor oppressor, nor fraudulent person, nor drunkard, nor tavern-haunter, nor whoremaster, nor rioter, nor nightwalker, nor unclean, nor prosane in his language, nor slanderer, nor liar, nor furious, nor malicious, nor reviler: he is falsely said to be of a conversation that becomes the gospel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent walk and conversation. Without such things as these, he does not obey the laws of Christ, and laws that he and his apostles did abundantly insist on, as of greatest importance

and necessity.

2. In order to men's being true Christians, it is neceffary that they profecute the business of religion, and the fervice of God with great earnestness and diligence, as the work which they devote themselves to, and make the main business of their lives. All Christ's peculiar people, not only do good works, but are zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. No man can do the fervice of two masters at once. They that are God's true servants, do give up themselves to his service, and make it as it were their whole work, therein employing their whole hearts, and the chief of their strength; Phil. iii. 13. 'This one thing I do.' Christians in their effectual calling, are not called to idleness, but to labour in God's vineyard, and spend their day in doing a great and laborious fervice. All true Christians comply with this call, (as is implied in its being an effectual call), and do the work of Christians; which is every where in the New Testament compared to those exercises, wherein men are wont to exert their strength, with the greatest earnestness, as running, wrestling, fighting,. All true Christians are good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, and ' fight the good fight of faith:' for none but those who do fo, do 'ever lay hold on eternal life.' Those who

who ' fight as those that beat the ear,' never win the crown of victory. 'They that run in a race, run all; but one wins the prize; and they that are flack and negligent in their course, do not ' fo run, as that they " may obtain.' The kingdom of heaven is not to be taken but by violence. Without earnestness there is no getting alone, in that narrow way that leads to life; and so no arriving at that state of glorious life and happinels which it leads to. Without earnest labour, there is no ascending the steep and high hill of Zion; and fo no arriving at the heavenly city on the top of it. Without a constant laboriousness, there is no stemming the fwift stream in which we fwim, so as ever to come to that fountain of water of life that is at the head of There is need that we should 'watch and pray 'always, in order to our escaping those dreadful things, that are coming on the ungodly, and our be-' ing counted worthy to stand before the Son of man.' There is need of our 's putting on the whole armour of God, and doing all to stand, in order to our avoiding a total overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by the ' fiery darts of the devil.' There is need that we should ' forget the things that are behind, and be reaching forth to the things that are before, and opressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high ' calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,' in order to our obtaining that prize. Slothfulness in the fervice of God, in his professed servants, is as damning, as open rebellion: for the flothful fervant, is a wicked fervant, and shall be cast into outer darkness, among God's open enemies, Matth. xxv. 26. 30. They that are flothful, are not 'followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promifes; Heb, vi. 11. 12. And we defire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not flothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promifes.' And all they who follow that cloud of witnesses that are gone before to heaven, ' do lay aside Ii3

every weight, and the fin that easily besets them, and do run with patience the race that is set before them, Heb. xii. I. That true saith, by which persons rely on the righteousness of Christ, and the work that he hath done for them, and do truly seed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with such a spirit of earnestness in the Christian work and course. Which was typissed of old, by the manner of the children of Israel's seeding on the paschal lamb; who were directed to eat it, as those that were in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand; Exod. xii.

II. And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover.'

3. Every true Christian perseveres in this way of universal obedience, and diligent and earnest service of God, through all the various kinds of trials that he meets with, to the end of life. That all true saints, all those that do obtain eternal life, do thus persevere in the practice of religion, and the service of God, is a doctrine so abundantly taught in the scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the texts which imply it would be endless. I shall content myself with referring to

fome in the margin *.

But that in perseverance in obedience, which is chiefly infifted on in the scripture, as a special note of the truth of grace, is the continuance of professors in the practice of their duty, and being stedfast in an holy walk, through the various trials that they meet with.

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^{*} Deut. v. 29. Deut. xxxii. 18. 19. 20. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Pfal. lxxviii. 7. 8. 10. 11. 35. 36. 37. 41. 42. 56. &c. Pfal. cvi. 3. 12.—15. Pfal. cxxv. 4. 5.—Prov. xxvi. 11. If. lxiv. 5. Jer. xvii. 13. Ezek. iii. 20. and xviii. 24. and xxxiii. 12. 13. Matth. x. 22. and xiii. 4—8. with verfes 19—23. and xxv. 8. and xxiv. 12. 13. Luke ix. 62. and xii. 35. &c. and xxii. 28. and xvii. 32. John viii. 30, 31. and xv. 6. 7. 8. 10. 16. Rom. ii. 7. and xi. 22. Col. i. 22. 23. Heb. iii. 6. 12. 14. and vi. 11. 12. and x. 35. &c.—James i. 25. Rev. ii. 13. 26. and ii. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 4—8.

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By trials here, I mean those things that occur, and that a professor meets with in his course, that do especially render his continuance in his duty, and faithfulnels to God, difficult to nature. These things are from time to time called in scripture by the name of trials, or temptations, (which are words of the same fignification). These are of various kinds: there are many things that render persons continuance in the way of their duty difficult, by their tendency to cherish and foment, or to ftir up and provoke their lufts and corruptions. Many things make it hard to continue in the way of their duty, by their being of an alluring nature, and having a tendency to entice persons to sin; or by their tendency to take off restraints, and embolden them in iniquity. Other things are trials of the foundness and stedfastness of professors, by their tendency to make their duty appear terrible to them, and fo to affright and drive them from it; fuch as the fufferings which their duty will expose them to; pain, ill-will, contempt, and reproach, or loss of outward possessions and comforts. If persons, after they have made a profession of religion, live any confiderable time in this world, which is fo full of changes, and fo full of evil, it cannot be otherwise, than that they should meet with many trials of their fincerity and stedfastness. And besides, it is God's manner, in his providence, to bring trials on his professing friends and fervants designedly, that he may manifest them, and may exhibit fufficient matter of conviction of the state which they are in, to their own consciences, and oftentimes to the world. As appears by innumerable scriptures; some are referred to the margin *.

True

^{*} Gen. xxii. 1. Exod. xv. 25. and xvi. 4. Deut. viii. 2. 15. 16. and xiii. 3. Judg. ii. 22. and iii. 1. 4. Job xxiii. 10. Psal. lxvi. 10. 11. Ezek. iii. 20. Dan. xii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. Matth. viii. 19. 20. and xviii. 21. 22. Luke i. 35. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 2 Cor. viii 8. Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 12. 1 John ii. 19. Heb. xi. 17. Rev. iii. 10.

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True faints may be guilty of fome kinds and degrees of backsliding, and may be foiled by particular temptations, and may fall into fin, yea great fins; but they can never fall away fo, as to grow weary of religion, and the service of God, and habitually to dislike it and neglect it, either on its own account, or on account of the difficulties that attend it; as is evident by Gal. vi. o. Rom. ii. 7. Heb. x. 36. If. xliii. 22. Mal. i. 13. They can never backflide, fo as to continue no longer in a way of univerfal obedience; or fo, that it shall cease to be their manner to observe all the rules of Christianity, and do all duties required, even in the most disficult circumstances t. This is abundantly manifest by the things

+ " One way of fin is exception enough against mens falvation, though their temptations be great. Some persons delight in iniquity; they take pleasure in rudeness, and intemperate practices: but there be others, that do not delight in fin; when they can handsomely avoid it, they do not chuse it; except they be under some great necessity, they will not do it. They are afraid to fin; they think it is dangerous, and have some care to avoid it: but sometimes they force themselves to fin; they are reduced to difficulties, and cannot tell how well to avoid it; it is a dangerous thing not to do it. If Naaman do not bow himself in the house of Rimmon, the king will be in a rage with him, take away his office, it may be take away his life, and fo he complies; 2 Kings v. 18.—So Jeroboam forced himself to set up the calves at Dan and Bethel: he thought that if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship, they would return to Rehoboam, and kill him; therefore he must think of some expedient to deliver himself in this strait; I Kings xii. 27. 28. He was driven by appearing necessity to take this wicked courfe.-So the stony-ground hearers were willing to retain the profession of the true religion : but the case was such, that they thought they could not well do it; Matth. xiii, 21. Whentribulation or perfecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.'-So Achan and Gehzai had fingular opportunities to get an estate; if they live twenty years they are not like to have such an advantage: and they force themselves to borrow a point, and break the law of God. They lay a necessity on estate, and liberty, and life, but not

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things that have been observed already. Nor can they ever fall away fo, as habitually to be more engaged in other things, than in the bufiness of religion; or so that it should become their way and manner to ferve fomething elfe more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with fuch earnestness and diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the business of religion; unless those words of Christ can fall to the ground, ' Ye cannot serve two masters,' and those of the apostle, ' He that will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God; and unless a faint can change his God, and vet be a true faint. Nor can a true faint ever fall away fo, that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable difference in his walk and behaviour fince his conversion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new men, new creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are fanctified throughout, in spirit, soul, and body; old things are pasfed away, all things are become new; they have new hearts, and new eyes, new ears, new tongues, new hands, new feet; i. e. a new conversation and practice; and they walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of life. And they that fall away, and cease visibly to do so, it is a sign they never were risen with Christ*. And especially when mens opinion of their being

upon obedience. If a man be willing to ferve God in ordinary cases, but excuse himself when there be great difficulties, he is not godly. It is a small matter to serve God when men have no temptation: but Lot was holy in Sodom, Noah was righteous in the old world. Temptations try men, but they do not force men to sin: and grace will establish the heart in a day of temptation." They are blessed that do endure temptation, James i. 12.; but they are cursed that fall away in a day of temptation. Stoddard's Way to know sincerity and hypocrify.

* Hence we learn what verdict to pass and give in, concerning those men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never had oil in the vessel; never had a dram of grace in their heart. Thus I John ii. 19. 'If they had been of us, 'they would no doubt have continued with us.' It seems

being converted, and so in a safe estate, is the very cause of their coming to this, it is a most evident fign of their hypocrify +. And that, whether their falling away be into their former fins, or into some new kind of wickedness, having the corruption of nature only turned into a new channel, instead of its being mortified. when persons that think themselves converted, though they do not return to former profaneness and lewdness; yet from the high opinion they have of their experiences, graces, and privileges, gradually fettle more and more in a felf-righteous and spiritually proud temper of mind, and in such a manner of behaviour and conversation as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with men, however far they may feem to be from their former evil practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and

they were fuch men, who were so eminent and excellent, as that there were no brands nor marks upon them, to give notice to the churches, that they were marked out for aposlacy; but were only discovered to be unfound, by their aposlacy; and this was argument good enough." Shepard's

Parable, Part I. p. 226.

+ "When a man's rifing is the cause of his fall, or seals a man up in his fall, or at least the cause through his corruption. Ex. Gr. Time was, a man lived a loofe, careless, carnal life; by the ministry of some word, or reading of some book, or speaking with some friend, he comes to be convinced of his misery and woful condition, and sees no good nor grace in himself; he hath even been hitherto deceived: at last he comes to get some light, some taste, some sorrows, some heart to use the means, some comfort, and mercy, and hope of life; and when it is thus with him, now he falls; he grows full and falls; and this rifing is the cause of his fall; his light is darkness and death to him; and grows to a form of knowledge; his rifing makes him fall to formality, and then to profaneness; and so his tasting satisfies him; his forrows empty his heart of forrow for fin; and his forrows for his falls harden his heart in his falls, and all the means of recovering him harden him. Look as it is in difeafes; if the physic and meat turns to be poison, then there is no hope of a recovery; a man is fick to death now. The faint's little measure makes him forget what is behind." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 226.

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t's l's may render their last state far worse than the first. For this seems to be the very case of the Jews of that generation that Christ speaks of, Matth. xii. 43. 44. 45. who being awakened by John the baptist's preaching, and brought to a reformation of their former licentious courses, whereby the unclean spirit was as it were turned out, and the house swept and garnished; yet being empty of God and of grace, became full of themselves, and were exalted in an exceeding high opinion of their own righteousness and eminent holiness, and became hahituated to an answerably self-exalting behaviour; so changing the sins of publicans and harlots, for thos of the Pharisees; and in the issue, had seven devils, worse than the first.

Thus I have explained what exercise and fruit I mean, when I say, that gracious affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.

The reason why gracious affections have such a tendency and effect, appears from many things that have already been observed, in the preceding parts of this discourse.

The reason of it appears from this, that gracious affections do arise from those operations and influences which are spiritual, and that the inward principle from whence they flow, is something divine, a communication of God, a participation of the divine nature, Christ living in the heart, the Holy Spirit dwelling there, in union with the faculties of the foul, as an internal vital principle, exerting his own proper nature, in the exercise of those faculties. This is fufficient to shew us why true grace should have fuch activity, power, and efficacy. No wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has omnipotence on its side. If God dwells in the heart, and be vitally united to it, he will shew that he is a God, by the efficacy of his operation. Christ is not in the heart of a faint, as in a sepulchre, or as a dead faviour, that does nothing; but as in his temple, and as one that is alive from the dead. For in the heart

where Christ favingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the power of that endless life that he received at his refurrection. Thus every faint that is the subject of the benefit of Christ's sufferings, is made to know and experience the power of his refurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate fpring of grace in the heart, is all life, all power, all act; 2 Cor. ii. 4.— 'In demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.' I Thest. i. 5. 'Our ' gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' 1 Cor. iv. 20. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Hence faving affections, though oftentimes they do not make fo great a noise and show as others; yet have in them a fecret folidity, life, and strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the heart, leading it into a kind of captivity, 2 Cor. x. 5. gaining a full and fledfast determination of the will for God and holiness, Pfal. cx. 3. ' Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' And thus it is that holy affections have a governing power in the course of a man's life. A statue may look very much Tike a real man, and a beautiful man; yea it may have, in its appearance to the eye, the refemblance of a very lively, strong, and active man; but yet an inward principle of life and strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to país, there is no action or operation to answer the shew. False discoveries and affections do not go deep enough, to reach and govern the fpring of mens actions and practice. The feed in ftony ground had not deepness of earth, and the root did not go deep enough to bring forth fruit. But gracious affections go to the very bottom of the heart, and take hold of the very inmost springs of life and activity. Herein chiefly appears the power of true godliness, viz. in its being effectual in practice. And the efficacy of godliness in this respect, is what the apostle has respect to, when he speaks of the power of god-

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in wit liness, 2 Tim. iii. 5. as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how some professor of religion would notoriously fail in the practice of it, and then in the 5th verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy practice, they deny the power of godliness, though they have the form of it. Indeed the power of godliness is exerted in the first place within the soul, in the sensible, lively exercise of gracious affections there. Yet the principal evidence of this power of godliness, is in those exercises of holy affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the will, and conquering the lusts and corruptions of men, and carrying men on in the way of holiness, through all temptation, difficulty,

and opposition.

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Again, the reason why gracious affections have their exercise and effect in Christian practice, appears from this, (which has also been before observed), that 'the ' first objective ground of gracious affections, is the ' transcendently excellent and amiable nature of di-' vine things, as they are in themselves, and not ' any conceived relation they bear to felf, or felf-in-' terest.' This skews why holy affections will cause men to be holy in their practice universally. What makes men partial in religion is, that they feek themfelves, and not God, in their religion, and close with religion, not for its own excellent nature, but only to serve a turn. He that closes with religion only to ferve a turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines ferves that turn; but he that closes with religion for its own excellent and lovely nature, clofes with all that has that nature: he that embraces religion for its own fake, embraces the whole of religion. This also shews why gracious affections will cause men to practise religion perseveringly, and at all times. Religion may altergreatly in process of time, as to its confistence with men's private interest, in many respects; and therefore he that complies with it only for felfish views, is liable, in change of

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times, to forfake it: but the excellent nature of religion, as it is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all times, and through all changes; it never

alters in any respect.

The reason why gracious affections issue in holy practice, also surther appears from the kind of excellency of divine things, that it has been observed in the foundation of all holy affections, viz. 'their importance excellency, or the beauty of their holiness.' No wonder that a love to holiness, for holiness sake, inclines persons to practise holiness, and to practise every thing that is holy. Seeing holiness is the main thing that excites, draws, and governs all gracious affections, no wonder that all such affections tend to holiness. That which men love, they defire to have and to be united to, and possessed of. That beauty which men delight in, they defire to be adorned with. Those acts which men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of that divine teaching and leading of the Spirit of God, which there is in gracious affections, shews the reason of this tendency of such affections to an universally holy practice. For as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine teaching and leading, gives the soul a natural relish of the sweetness of that which is holy, and of every thing that is holy, so far as it comes in view, and excites a disrelish and disgust of

every thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the nature of that spiritual knowledge, which is the soundation of all holy affection, as consisting in a sense and view of that excellency in divine things, which is supreme and transcendent. For hereby these things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him; they see him worthy that they should for-

fake all for him: by the fight of that superlative as miableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labour with earnestness and activity in his service, and made willing to go through all difficulties for his sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him for it makes a deep independent on their minds; that they cannot forget him; and they will sollow him whithers ever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavour to draw them away from him.

The reason of this practical tendency and iffae of gracious affections, further appears from what has been observed of fuch affections being wastended with a thorough conviction of the judgment of the reality and certainty of divine things? No wonder that they who were neverthoroughly convinced that there is any reality matherthings of religion, will hes ver be at the labbur and would of fuch an earnelly universal, and persevering practice of religion, three all difficulties, felf demals, and fufferinged in a depent dence on that which they are not convinced of But on the other hand! they who are thoroughly convid! ced of the certain trail of these things, mult needs be governed by them in their practice; for thethings revealed in the word of God are for great, and for infinitely more important than all other things, that of is inconfiftent with the human hature, that a drant should fully believe the truth of them, and not be in: fluenced by them above all things in his practice bad

Again, the reason of this expression and effect of holy affections in the practice, appears from what has been observed of the change of nature, accompanying fuch affections. Without a change of nature, men's practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the tree be made good, the fruit will not be good. Men do dong where grapes of thorns, not figs of this less. The swiner grapes of thorns, not figs of this less. The swiner may be wasted, and appear clean for a little while; but yet, without a change of nature, he has

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will still wallow in the mire. Nature is a more powerful principle of a Gion, than any thing that opposes it: though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: it is like the stream of a river, it may be stopped a while with a dam, but if nothing be done to dry the fountain, it will not be stopped always; it will have a courfe, either in its old channel, or a new one. Nature is a thing more constant and permanent, than any of those things that are the foundation of carnal men's reformation and righteousness. When a natural man denies his luft, and lives a strict, religious life, and feems humble, painful, and earnest in religion, it is not natural, it is all a force against nature; as when a stone is violently thrown upwards; but that force will be gradually spent; yet nature will remain in its full strength, and so prevails again, and the stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt nature is not mortified, but the principle left whole in a man, it is a vain thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly nature infused, then may it well be expected, that men will walk in newness of life, and continue to do so to the end of their days.

The reason of this practical exercise and effect of holy affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that spirit of humility which attends them. Humility is that wherein a spirit of obedience does much consist. A proud spirit is a rebellious spirit, but a humble spirit is a yieldable, subject, obediential spirit. We see among men, that the servant who is of a haughty spirit, is not apt in every thing to be submissive and obedient to the will of his master; but it is otherwise with that servant

who is of a lowly spirit.

And that lamb-like, dove-like spirit, that has been spoken of, which accompanies all gracious affections, fulfils (as the apostle observes, Rom. xiii. 8. 9. 10.

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and Gal. v. 14. all the duties of the fecond table of the law, wherein Christian practice does very much confift, and wherein the external practice of Christing ments, and even our own lives estinos which which To Almel the reason why gracious affections are attenda ed with that first universal and constant obedience which has been poken of, further yappears, from what has been observed of that tenderness of spirit; which accompanies the affections of true faints caufing in them fo quick and lively a fenfe of pains thro! the prefence of moral evil, and fuch a dread of the margin ". Now furely having affive to sonarragge And one great reason why the Christian practice which flows from wgracious affections, is universal, and constant, and perfevering, appears from what has been observed of those affections themselves, from whence this practice flows, being univerfal anti-conflant in all kinds of holy exerciles, and towards all objects, and mall circumstances, and at all leafons, in a beautiful lymmetry and proportion as sevielino -ClAnd much of the reason why holy affections are expressed and manifested in fuch an earnesthes, not tivity, and engagedness and perseverance in holy practicel as has been spoken of, appears from what has been observed, of the spiritual appetite and longing after further attainments in religion, which evermore attends true affection, and does not decay, but increases as those affections increases by hus sonsis

Thus we see how the tendency of holy affections. to fuch a Christian practice as has been explained, appears from each of those characteristics of holy af-

fection that have been before spoken of.

And this point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be confidered, that the holy foriptures do abundantly place fincerity and foundness in religion, in making a dull choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forfak ng all for him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the coff; in oth hearts closing and com-Kk3 plying

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plying with the religion of Jefus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and for ever, unto Christ, without keeping back any thing, or making any referve; or, in one word, in the great duty of felf-denial for Christ; or in denying, i. e. as it were disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the texts to this purpole referred to in the margin *. Now furely having an heart to forfake all for Christ, tends to actually forfaking all for him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. An having an heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to a denying onrielves indeed, when Christ and felf-interest stand in competition. A giving up ourselves, with all that we have, in our hearts, without making any referve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our hearts entirely clofing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the cost, tends to an universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties that we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance.

^{*} Matth. v. 29. 30. Chap. vi. 24. Chap. viii. 19.—22. Ch.p. iv. 18. to 22. Chap. x. 37. 38. 39. Chap. xiii. 44. 45. 46. Chap. xvi. 24. 25. 26. Chap. xviii. 8. 9. Chap. xix. 21. 27. 28. 29. Luke v. 27. 28. Chap. x. 42. Chap. xii. 33. 34. Chap. xiv. 16.—20. 25.—33. Chap. xvi. 13. Acts iv. 34. 35. with Chap. v. 1.—11. Rom. vi. 3.—8. Gal. ii. 20. Chap. vi. 14. Philip. iii. 7.—10. Jam. i. 8. 9. 10. Chap. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. Rev. xiv. 4. Gen. xii. 1.—4. with Heb. xi. 8. 9. 10. Gen. xxii. 12. and Heb. xi. 17. Chap. xi. 24.—27. Deut. xiii. 6. and Chap. xxxii. 9. Ruth. i. 6.—16. with Pfal. xlv. 10. 11. and 2 Sam. xv. 19.—22. Pfal. lxxiii. 25. Pfal. xvi. 5. 6. Lam. iii. 24. Jer. x. 16.

The tendency of grace in the heart to holy practice, is very direct, and the connection most natural, close, and necessary. True grace is not an unactive thing; there is nothing in heaven or earth of a more active nature; for it is life itself, and the most active kind of life, even spiritual and divine life. It is no barren thing; there is nothing in the universe that in its nature has a greater tendency to fruit. Godliness in the heart has as direct a relation to practice, as a fountain has to a stream, or as the luminous nature of the fun has to beams fent forth, or as life has to breathing, or the beating of the pulse, or any other vital act; or as a habit or principle of action has to action; for it is the very nature and notion of grace, that it is a principle of holy action or practice. Regeneration, which is that work of God in which grace is infused, has a direct relation to practice; for it is the very end of it, with a view to which the whole work is wrought: all is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold change wrought in the foul, so as directly to tend to this end; Eph. ii. 10. ' For we are his workmanship, ' created in Christ Jesus unto good works.' Yea it is the very end of the redemption of Christ; Tit. ii. 14. 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem ' us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' 2 Cor. v. 15. 'He died for all, that they which live, should onot henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again.' Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without ' fpot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to ferve the living God?' Col. i. 21. 22. ' And you that were fometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath ' he reconciled, in the body of his flesh thro' death, to prefent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his fight.' I Pet. i. 18. 'For as much

as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as filver and gold, from your vain conversation. Luke i. 74. 75. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might ferve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.' God often speaks of holy. practice, as the end of that great typical redemption, the redemption from Egyptian bondage; ast Exod iv. 23. 'Let my fon go, that he may ferve! "me.' So chap. iv. 23. and vii. 16. and viii. 1. 20. and ix. E. 13. and x. 3. And this is also declared to be the end of election; John xv. 16. 'Ye have "Hot chofen me, but I have chofen you, and ordains ded your that you thould go and bring forth fruit, Cand that your frait should remain a Eph i. 156 Alcel Ceording as the thath chosen as in him, before the of foundation of the world, tithat we ishould be cholies wand without blame before hinvin love Chapt naros Detested unto good works; which God shath fores o'ordained that we should walk simithem? Holy practice is as much the end of all that God does about His faints, as fourt isothe end of all the husbandman' does about the growth of his field or vineyard das the matter is cottens represented in deripture; Matth. iit 918.11 dhap. wiii Streg. basquigs, inchap. xxi. 29. Will Fill and If waringto gut. And therefore evevirto died for them, and rofe again.' Heb. iv. 14. How much more thall the blood of Christ, who affections profess to know much is easy; but to bring your affections pro subjection, to wrestle with lusts, to cross your wills and yourselves upon every occasion, this is hard. The Lord poketh that in our lives we mould be serviceable to him and uteful to me That which is withing the Lord' and dur brethren are never the betten fornitie but the outgood to men. The Lord will have this done. What elfe, is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees is the end of our planting and watering, but that the trees is the end of our planting and watering. ward obed thee, flowing thence glorifieth God, and does 6 25.

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wiv beer Pre ry thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this end. This fruit of holy practice, is what every grace, and every discovery, and every individual thing, which belongs to Christian experience, has a direct tendency to †.

The constant and indissoluble connection that there is between a Christian principle and profession in the true saints, and the fruit of holy practice in their lives,

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may be filled with sap? And what is the end of that sap, but that the trees may bring forth fruit? What careth the husbandman for leaves and barren trees? Dr Preston of

the Church's Carriage.'

+ 'What is the end of every grace, but to mollify the heart, and make it pliable to some command or other? Look, how many commandments, fo many graces there are in virtue and efficacy, although not fo many feveral names are given them. The end of every fuch grace is to make us obedient: as the end of temperance is chaffity, to bow the heart to these commands, Be ye sober, &c. not in chambering and wantonness, &c. When the Lord commandeth us not to be angry with our brother, the end of meekness, and why the Lord infuseth it, is to keep us from unadvised rash anger. So faith, the end of it is to take Jesus Christ, to make us obedient to the command of the gospel, which commands us to believe in him. So as all graces do join together, but to frame and fashion the soul to obedience; then so much obedience as in your lives, so much grace in your hearts, and no more. Therefore ask your hearts, how subject you are to the Lord in your lives? was the counsel that Francis Spira gave to them about him, faith he, Learn all of me to take heed of severing faith and obedience; I taught justification by faith, but neglected ... bedience; and therefore is this befallen me. I have known fome godly men, whose comfort on their death-beds hathbeen not from the inward acts of their minds, which apart confidered, might be subject to misapprehensions, but from the course of obedience in their lives, issuing thence. Let Christians look to it, that in all their conversation, as they stand in every relation, as scholars, tradesmen, husbands, wives, look to this, that when they come to die, they have been subject in all things. This will yield comfort.' De Preston's Church's Carriage.

was typified of old in the frame of the golden candlestick in the temple. It is beyond doubt that that golden candleftick, with its feven branches and feven lamps, was a type of the church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself has been pleased to put that matter out of doubt, by reprefenting his church by fuch a golden candlestick, with feven lamps, in the fourth chapter of Zechariah. and reprefenting the feven churches of Afia by feven golden candlesticks, in the first chapter of the Revelation. That golden candlestick in the temple was every where, throughout its whole frame, made with knops and flowers, Exod. xxv. 31. to the end, and chap. xxxvii. 17.-24. The word translated knop, in the original fignifies apple or pomegranate. There was a knop and a flower, a knop and a flower: wherever there was a flower, there was an apple or pomegranate with it: the flower and the fruit were constantly connected, without The flower contained the principles of the fruit, and a beautiful promifing appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful appearance; the principle or shew of fruit, had evermore real fruit attending it, or succeeding So it is in the church of Christ: there is the principle of fruit in grace in the heart; and there is an amiable profession, signified by the open flowers of the candlestick; and there is answerable fruit, in holy practice, constantly attending this principle and profession. Every branch of the golden candlestick, thus composed of golden apples and flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining lamp on the top of it. For it is by this means that the faints shine as lights in the world, by making a fair and good profession of religion, and having their profession evermore joined with answerable fruit in practice: agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matth. v. 15. 16. ' Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may fee your good works, and e glorify your Father which is in heaven.' A fair and beautiful profession, and golden fruits accompanying one another,

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another, are the amiable ornaments of the true church Therefore we find that apples and flowers of Christ. were not only the ornaments of the candlestick in the temple, but of the temple itself, which is a type of the church; which the apostle tells us, ' is the temple of ' the living God.' See 1 Kings vi. 18. ' And the ce-' dar of the house within was carved with knops, and open flowers.' The ornaments and crown of the pillars, at the entrance of the temple, were of the fame fort: they were lilies and pomegranates, or flowers and fruits mixed together, I Kings vii. 18. 19. So it is with all those that are 'as pillars in the temple of God, who shall go no more out,' or never be ejected as intruders; as it is with all true faints; Rev. iii. 12. · Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the tem-

' ple of my God, and he shall go no more out.'

Much the fame thing feems to be fignified by the ornaments on the skirt of the ephod, the garment of Aaron the high priest; which were golden bells and pomegranates. That thefe skirts of Aaron's garment reprefent the church, or the faints, (that are as it were the garment of Christ), is manifest; for they are evidently fo spoken of, Psal cxxxiii. 1. 2. Behold, how good and how pleafant it is for brethren to dwell together ' in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the ' head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments. That ephod of Aaron fignified the same with the seamless coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's coat had no feam, but was woven from the top throughout, fo it was with the ephod, Exod. xxix. 22. As God took care in his providence, that Christ's coat should not be rent; fo God took special care that the ephod should not be rent; Exod. xxviii. 32. and chap. xxxix. 23. The golden bells on this ephod, by their precious matter and pleafant found, do well represent the good profession that the faints make; and the pomegranates, the fruit they bring forth. And as in the hem of the ephod, bells and pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was a golden

bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, Exod. xxviii. 34. and chap. xxxix. 26.: so it is in the true faints; their good profession and their good fruit, do constantly accompany one another: the fruit they bring forth in life, evermore answers the pleafant found of their profession.

Again, the very same thing is represented by Christ, in his description of his spouse, Cant. vii. 2. 'Thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.' Here again are beautiful flowers, and good fruit, accompanying one another. The lilies were fair and beautiful

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flowers, and the wheat was good fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore found in true faints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so it is found in them only; none but true Christians do live such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unfanctified men are workers of iniquity: they are of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they will do. There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, and both begin and finish the tour: they will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the proteffors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways: they will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him whitherfoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, and though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to fin; the chains of their old task-masters are not broken: their lusts yet have a reigning power in their hearts; and therefore to these masters they will bow down again*. Dan. xii. 10. ' Many shall be pu-

^{* &}quot;No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous; Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill; and every wicked man his lust." Shepard's sincere convert, 1st edition, p. 962

* rified and made white, and tried : but the wicked will do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall underfland.

" There is never an unfound heart in the world, but as they fay of witches, they have some familiar that sucks them, fo they have some lust that is beloved of them, some

beloved there is they have given a promise to never to for-fake." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 15.
"No man that is married to the law, but his fig-leaves cover fome nakedness. All his duties ever brood some lust. There is some one fin or other the man lives in; which either the Lord discovers, and he will not part with, as the young man; or elfe is fo spiritual, he cannot see all his lifetime. Read through the strictest of all, and see this, Matth. xxiii. Painted sepulchres. Paul that was blameles, yet (Eph. ii. 3. Tit. iii. 3.) ' ferved divers lufts and pleafures.' And the reason is, the law is not the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8. 9. which breaks off from every fin. There is no law that can give life, Gal. iii. 21. and hence many men have strong resolutions, and break all again. Hence men fin and forrow, and pray again, and then go with more eafe in their fin. Examine thyself, is there any living lust with thy righteousness? It is sure, it is a righteousness thou art married to, and never wert yet matched to Christ." Shepard's Parable, Part J. p. 19. 20.

" No hypocrite, though he closeth with Christ, and for a time grow up in knowledge of, and communion with Christ, but he hath at that time hidden lusts and thorns that overgrow his growings, and choke all at last, and in conclufion mediates a league between Christ and his lusts, and feeks to reconcile them together." . Shepard's Parable,

Part I. p. 109.

"- Their faith is in fuch a party, as never was yet tho. roughly rent from fin. And here is the great wound of the most cunning hypocrites living --- Let a man be cast down as low as hell with forrow, and lie under chains, quaking, in apprehension of terror to come ; let a man then be raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live; let a man reform and thine like an earthly angel; yet if not rent from luft, that either you did never see it, or if so, you have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, worldly, fluggish still, false in your dealings, cunning in your tradings, devils in your families, images in your churches; you are objects of pity now, and shall be of terror at the great day. For where fin remains in power, it will bring faith, and Christ,

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and joy into bondage and service of itself." Shepard's Pa-

rable, Part I. p. 125.

" Methinks it is with the best hypocrites, as it is with divers old merchants; they prize and defire the gain of merchandise; but to be at the trouble to prepare the ship, to put themselves upon the hazards and dangers of the ship, to go and fetch the treasure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and desire earnestly the treasures of heaven; but to be at the trouble of a heaven-voyage to fetch this treasure, to pass through the valley of Bacca, tears, temptations, the powers of darkness, the breaches, opposition, and contradictions of a finful unbelieving heart, good and evil report, to pass from one depth and wave to another, this and the best hypocrite fails in; and hence loses all at last. And this I conceive to be one of the great differences between the strong defires and esteems of hypocrites and faints.-Look, as it is with men that have two trades, or two shops; one is as much as ever they can follow or tend; they are forced at last to put off one, and they must neglect one; so here, That spirit of sloth and flumber, which the Lord ever leaves the best hypocrite to, fo mightily oppresseth all their senses, that they cannot use effectually all means to accomplish their ends. And hence a man defires the end, but has it not; Prov. xiii. 4." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 150. 151.

"Read through all the scripture; constantly, never any hypocrites but they had this brand, Matth. vii. 23. 'You workers of iniquity.' Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 195.

" A carnal man may hit upon some good duty that God commands, and refrain some fin that God forbids; but to go through, he cannot; to take up reproach and difgrace, to lose his credit, to forfake his friends, to lose honour, and riches, and pleasures; this he will not do, until he be hum-

bled." Dr Prefton on Paul's conversion.

"So it is with men, because they want humiliation. Therefore their profession and they do not continue, but part willingly one from another. They will do fome things, but not all things: and they will forego fome things, but not all things. And therefore our Saviour faith, Luke xiv. · He that will not forfake all for my fake, is not worthy of me.' He is not worth the faving, that prizes not me above all things whatfoever. And a man will not prize Chrift, nor forfake all things for Christ, until he be humbled." bid.

wicked, yet will he not learn righteoufness; in the and of uprightness will he deal unjustly. Is xxxv. 8. And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it fhall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. Hos. xiv. 9. The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgreffors shall fall therein. Job xxvii. 8. 9. 10. What is the hope of the hypocrite?-Will he delight himfelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God? An unfanctified man may hide his fin, and may in many things, and for a feafon, refrain from fin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his fin, and give it a bill of divorce: fin is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: 'Wickedness is sweet in his mouth; and therefore he hides it under his tongue; he spares it, and forfakes it not; but keeps it still within his mouth,' Job xx. 12. 13. Herein chiefly confifts the straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life; upon the account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, viz. that it is a way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all ungodliness, and so a way of felf-denial or felf-renunciation.

Many natural men, under the means that are used with them, and God's strivings with them to bring them to forfake their fins, do by their fins as Pharaoh did by his pride and covetoufnels, which he gratified by keeping the children of Israel in bondage, when God strove with him to bring him to let the people go. When God's hand pressed Pharaoh sore, and he was exercised with fears of God's future wrath, he entertained fome thoughts of letting the people go, and promifed he would do it; but from time to time he broke his promises, when he saw there was respite. When God filled Egypt with thunder and lightening, and the fire ran along the ground, then Pharaoh is brought to confels his fin with feeming humility, and to have a great refolution to let the people go, Exod. ix. 27. 28. ' And · Pharaoh fent, and called for Mofes and Aaron, and ' said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is

righteous, and I and my people are wicked: intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.' So sinners are sometimes by thunders and lightenings, and great terrors of the law, brought to a feeming work of humiliation, and to appearance to part with their fins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a disposition to dismiss them, than Pharaoh was to let the people go. Pharaoh in the struggle that was between his conscience and his lusts, was for contriving that God might be ferved, and he enjoy his lusts that were gratified by the flavery of the people, too. Moses infisted that Israel's God should be ferved and facrificed to: Pharaoh was willing toconfent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people; 'Go facrifice to your God in the land, fays he, Exod. viii. 25. So, many finners. are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. Moses objected against complying with Pharaoh's proposal, that ferving God, and yet continuing in Egypt under their talk malters, did not agree together, and were inconfistent one with another; (there is noferving God, and continuing flaves to fuch enemies of God at the same time). After this Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away : he was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So domany hypocrites with respect to their sins. Afterwards Pharaoh consented to let the men go, if they would leave the women and children, Exod. x. 8. 9. 10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he confented that they should go, even women and children, as well as men, provided they would leave their cattle behind? but he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had, Exod. x. 24. So it oftentimes is with finners; they are willing to part with some of their fins, but not all; they are brought to part with the more gross acts of fin, but not to part with their lufts, in leffer indulgencies of them. Whereas we must

part with all our fins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, men, women, children, and cattle; they must all be let go, with ' their young, and with their old, with their fons, and with their daughters, with their flocks, and with their herds, there must not be an hoof left behind; as Mofes told Pharaoh, with respect to the children of Israel. At last, when it came to extremity. Pharaoh confented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not stedfastly of that mind; he soon repented, and pursued after them again: and the reason was, that those lusts of pride and covetousness, that were gratified by Pharaoh's dominion over the people, and the gains of their fervice, were never really mortified in him, but only violently restrained. And thus, he being guilty of backfliding, after his feeming compliance with God's commands, was destroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of disobedience to the commands of God, that may feem to be universal; as to what appears, for a little feafon; but because it is a mere force; without the mortification of the inward principle of fin, they will not persevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and fo bring on themselves dreadful and remediless destruction. There were many false disciples in Christ's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; but some on one occasion, and fome on another, went back and walked no more with him *..

El3: From

* "The counterfeit and common grace of foolish virgins, after some time of glorious profession, will certainly go out and be quite spent. It consumes in the using, and shining, and burning.—Men that have been most forward, decay; their gifts decay, life decays.—It is so, after some time of profession; for at first, it rather grows than decays and withers: but afterward they have enough of it, it withers and dies.—The Spirit of God comes upon many hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful measure of awakening grace; it somes upon them, as it did upon Balaam, and as it is in overslowing

From what has been faid, it is manifeft, that Chrifvian practice, or a holy life, is a great and distinguishing fign of true and faving grace. But I may go further, and affert, that it is the chief of all the figns of grace, both as an evidence of the fincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the greatest fign of grace. Therefore, to fet this matter in a clear light, I. will endeavour particularly and diffinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the principal sign by which Chris-

overflowing waters, which spread far, and grow very deep, and fill many empty places.—Though it doth come upon them fo, yet it doth never rest within, so as to dwell there, to take up an eternal mansion for himself .- Hence it doth decay by little, and little, until at last it is quite gone. As. ponds filled with rain water, which comes upon them; not spring-water, that riseth up within them; it dries up by little and little, until quite dry." Shepard's Parable, Part

II. p. 58. 59.
Some men may apprehend Christ, neither out of fearof mifery, nor only to preferve fome fin; but God lets in light and hear of the bleffed beams of the glorious gospel of the Son of God; and therefore there is mercy, rich, free, fweet, for damned, great, vile finners: good Lord, faith the foul, what a fweet ministry, word, God, and gospel is this! and there rests. This was the frame of the stony ground; which heard the word, and received it with joy, and for a time believed. And this is the case of thousands, that are much affected with the promife and mercy of Christ, and hang upon free grace for a time; but as it is with fweetfmells in a room, they continue not long; or as flowers, they grow old and withered, and then fall. In time of temptation, luft, and world, and floth is more sweet than Christ, and all his gospel is." Shepard's Parable, Part II. p. 168.

" Never any carnal heart, but some root of bitterness did grow up at last in this foil. Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 195. We shall see in experience; take the best professors living; though they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and follow the Lord; yet they will in time depart. -The Spirit never was given effectually to draw them. nor yet to keep them." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 205.

rians are to judge, both of their own and others fincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

1. I shall consider Christian practice and an holy life, as a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbours and bre-

thren.

And that this is the chief fign of grace in this respect, is very evident from the word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their fruits: Matth, vii. 16. ' Ye shall know them by their fruits.' And then, after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why it must needs be, that men's fruits must be the chief evidence of what fort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the affertion; ver. 20. ' Wherefore by their fruits e ye shall know them. Again, chap. xii. 3. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elfe " make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt.' --- As much as to fay, it is a very abford thing, for any to fuppose that the tree is good, and yet the fruit bad, that the tree is of one fort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit, Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, ' For the tree is known by its fruit,' than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is diffinguished from another. So Luke vi. 44. ' Every tree is known by his own fruit.' Christ no where fays, Ye shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers, or ye shall know men by their talk, or ye shall know them by the good story they tell of their experiences, or ye shall know them by the manner and air of their speaking, and emphasis and pathos of expression, or by their fpeaking feelingly, or by making a very great show by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections ye feel in your hearts to-

wards them; but by their fruits shall ye know them; the tree is known by its fruit; every tree is known by its own fruit. And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us; Matth. v. 16. ' Let your light so shine before men, that others feeing your good works, may · glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul; Christ directs that this light not only shine within, but that it should shine out before men, that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ doth not say, that others hearing your good works, your good story, or your pathetical expressions; but 'that others feeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Doubtlefs, when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, his rule is the best that is to be found. And the apostles do mention a Christian practice, as the principal ground of their effeem of persons as true Christians. As the apostle Paul, in the 6th chapter of Hebrews. There the apostle, in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of them that have great common illuminations, that have ' been enlightened, and have tafted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world tocome, that afterwards fall away, and are like barren ground, that is nigh unto curfing, whose end is to beburned; and then immediately adds in the oth verfe, (expressing his charity for the Christian Hebrews, as having that faving grace, which is better than all thefe common illuminations), but beloved, we are perfuaded better things of you, and things that accompany falvation; though we thus speak.' And then, in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them: he does not fay, that it was because

because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their fouls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work, and labour of love; for God is not unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love, which we have shewed towards his name. in that we have ministered to the faints, and do minis ter.' And the same apostle speaks of a faithful serving God in practice, as the proper proof to others of men's loving Christ above all, and preferring his honour to their private interest, Phil. ii. 21. 22. ' For all · feek their own, not the things which are Jefus . Christ's; but ye know the proof of him, that as a fon with the Father, he hath served with me in the gof-' pel.' So the apostle John expresses the same, as the ground of his good opinion of Gaius, 3 John 3 .- 6. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee.' But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in Gauis? and how did the apostle judge of the truth that was in him? it was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he faid, and had the very language of a Christian: but they testified, ' that he walked in the truth; as it follows, even as thou walkeft in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear ' that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy cha-" rity before the church.' Thus the apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they came and testified of his walking in the truth. And the apostle feems in this same place, to give it as a rule to Gaius how he should judge of others; in verse 10. he mentions one Diotrephes, that did not carry himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th verse, he directs Gaius to beware of fuch, and not to follow them; and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, exactly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, 'by their fruits ye thall know them;' fays the.

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the apostle, 'beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God; but he that doth evil, hath not feen God.' And I would further observe, that the apostle James, expressly comparing that way of shewing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of shewing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former; Jam. ii. 18. ' Yea, a man may fay, thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. A manifestation of our faith without works, or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in words; whereby a man professes faith. As the apostle says, ver. 14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man fay he hath faith?'-Therefore here are two ways of manifesting to our neighbour what is in our hearts; one by what we fay, and the other by what we do. But the apostle abundantly prefers the latter as the best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourfelves in words, our faying that we have faith, and that we are converted, and telling the manner how we came to have faith, and the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompany it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we fay; it is but shewing our faith by our words; which the apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and shewing our faith by our works.

And as the scripture plainly teaches, that practice is the best evidence of the sincerity of professing Christians; so reason teaches the same thing. Reason shews, that men's deeds are better and more faithful interpreters of their minds, than their words. The common sense of all mankind, through all ages and nations, teaches them to judge of men's hearts chiefly by their practice, in other matters: as, whether a man be a loyal subject, a true lover, a dutiful child, or a faithful servant. If a man professes a great deal of love and friendship to another, reason teaches all men, that such a pro-

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defion is not so great an evidence of his being a real and hearty friend, as his appearing a friend in deeds: being faithful and constant to his friend, in prosperity and adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himfelf, and fuffer in his personal interest, to do him a kindness. A wife man will trust to such evidences of the fincerity of friendship, further than a thousand earnest professions and solemn declarations, and most affectionate expressions of friendship in words. And there is equal reason, why practice should also be looked upon as the best evidence of friendship towards Christ. Reason favs the same that Christ said, in John xiv. 21. ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' Thus if we fee a man, who in the course of his life seems to follow and imitate Christ. and greatly to exert and deny himself for the honour of Christ, and to promote his kingdom and interest in the world; reason teaches, that this is an evidence of love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a man only favs he has love to Christ, and tells of the inward experiences he has had of love to him, what strong love he felt, and how his heart was drawn out in love at fuch and fuch a time, when it may be there appears but little imitation of Christ in his behaviour, and he feems backward to do any great matter for him, or to put himfelf out of his way for the promoting of his kingdom, but feems to be apt to excuse himself, whenever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a man, in declaring his experiences, tells how he found his heart weaned from the world, and faw the vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at fuch and fuch times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls heaven and earth to witness to it; but yet in his practice is violent in pursuing the world, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loth to part with much of it to charitable and pious uses, it comes from him almost like his heart's blood. But there is another professing Chris. tian, that fays not a great deal, yet in his behaviour appears ready at all times to forfake the world, whenever

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it stands in the way of his duty, and is free to part with it at any time, to promote religion and the good of his fellow-creatures. Reason teaches, that the latter gives far the most credible manifestation of an heart weaned from the world. And if a man appears to walk humbly before God and men, and to be of a conversation that favours of a broken heart, appearing patient and refigned to God under affliction, and meek in his behaviour amongst men; this is a better evidence of humiliation, than if a person only tells how great a sense he had of his own unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the duft, and was quite emptied of himself, and see himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, &c. &c. but yet acts as if he looked upon himfelf one of the first and belt of faints, and by just right the head of all the Christians in the town, and is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least contradiction or opposition; we may be affured in fuch a case, that a man's practice comes from a lower place in his heart than his profef-So (to mention no more instances) if a professor of Christianity manifests in his behaviour a pitiful tender spirit towards others in calamity, ready to bear their burdens with them, willing to fpend his substance for them, and to fuffer many inconveniencies in his worldly interest to promote the good of others souls and bodies; is not this a more credible manifestation of a spirit of love to men, than only a man's telling what love he felt to others at certain times, how he pitied their fouls, how his foul was in travail for them, and how he felt a hearty love and pity to his enemies; when in his behaviour he feems to be of a very felfish spirit, close and niggardly, all for himfelf, and none for his neighbours, and perhaps envious and contentious? Perfons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to fuffer much, and fo may profess it very earnestly and confidently, when really their hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate pangs, have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the glory of God. Paffing affections

affections eafily produce words; and words are cheap; and godfiness is more easily seigned in words than in actions. Christian practice is a costly laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, does not consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints:

Thus it is plain, that Christian practice is the best fign or manifestation of the true godliness of a professing Christian, to the eye of his neighbours.

But then the following thing should be well observ-

ed, that this matter may be rightly understood.

First, it must be observed, that when the scripture speaks of Christian practice, as the best evidence to others, of fincerity and truth of grace, a profeshon of Christianity is not excluded, but supposed. The rules mentioned, were rules given to the followers of Christ, to guide them in their thoughts of professing Christians, and those that offered themselves as some of their society, whereby they might judge of the truth of their pretences, and the fincerity of the profession they made; and not for the trial of heathens, or those that made no pretence to Christianity, and that Christians had nothing to do with. This is as plain as is possible in that great rule which Christ gives in the vii. of Matthew, ' By their fruits ve shall know them.' He there gives a rule how to judge of those that professed to be Christians, yea that made a very high profession, false prophets, ' who come ' in sheep's cloathing, as ver. 15.' So it is also with that of the apostle James, chap. ii. 18. ' Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' It is evident, that both thele forts of persons, offering to give up these diverse evidences of their faith, are professors of faith: this is implied in their offering each of them to give evidences of the faith they professed. And it is evident by the preceding verses, that the apostle is speaking of professors of faith in Jesus Christ. So it is very plain, that the apoltle John, in those passages that have been observed in Mm his

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his third epistle, is speaking of professing Christians. Though in these rules, the Christian practice of profesfors be spoken of as the greatest and most distinguishing fign of their fincerity in their profession, much more evidential than their profession itself; yet a profession of Christianity is plainly presupposed: it is not the main thing in the evidence, nor any thing diffinguishing in it; yet it is a thing requisite and necessary in it. As the having an animal body, is not any thing distinguishing of a man, from other creatures, and is not the main thing in the evidence of human nature, yet it is a thing requifite and necessary in the evidence. So that if any man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a perfon fent of God; these rules of Christ and his apostles do not at all oblige us to look upon him as a fincere Christian, let his visible practice and virtues be what they will. And not only do these rules take no place with respect to a man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed deist, Jew, Heathen, or open infidel; but also with respect to a man that only forbears to make a profession of Christianity; because these rules were given us only to judge of professing Christians: fruits must be joined with open flowers; bells and pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this inquiry, viz. when a man may be said to profess Christianity, or what profession may properly be called a profession of Christia-

nity?

I answer in two things.

a profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that

he has it. And therefore fo much as belongs to a thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated that thing; fo much is effential to the declaration of that thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration of that thing. If we take only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part that is effential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the effence of it is wanting. So if we profess only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus, in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that Jesus is the Messiah; for this reason, because such a belief is effential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that Jefus fatisfied for our fins, and other effential doctrines of the gospel, because a belief of these things also are esfential to Christianity. But there are other things as effential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly faid to profess Christianity. Thus it is effential to Christianity that we repent of our fins, that we be convinced of our own finfulness, and that we are fensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all fin, and that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour; and that we love him above all, and are willing for his fake to forfake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and for ever his, &c. Such things as these do as much belong to the effence of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the gospel: and therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession. Not that in order to a being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue : but certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the effence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should express in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's word, M m 2

or by feripture-examples of public professions of religion. God's people have made from time to time. Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: as of old, when persons were initiated as professors, they came confessing their fins, manifesting their humiliation for fin, Matth. iii. 6. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called the baptism of repentance, Mark i. 3. And John, when he had baptized them, exhorted them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, Matth. iii. 8. i. e. agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did fo, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, Matth. iii. 7. 8. 9. 10. 12. So the apostle Peter fays to the Jews, Acts ii. 38. ' Repent, and be baptized: which shews, that repentance is a qualification that must be visible in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly professed. So when the Jews that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public confession of repentance of their fins, Neh. ix. 2. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction, that God would be just in our damnation: see Neh. ix. 33: together with ver. 35. and the beginning of the next chapter. They should profess their faith in Jefus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ. Thus Philip, in order to baptizing the eunuch, required that he should profess that he believed with all his heart: and they that were received as visible Christians, at that great outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of Pentocost, appeared gladly to receive the gospel; Acts ii. 41. 'Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized; and the fame day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.' They should profess that they rely on Christ's righteousness only and strength, and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as heir only righteousness and portion. It is foretold, that

that all nations shall be brought publicly to make this profession, Is. xlv. 22. to the end: 'Look unto me, and' be ye faved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none elfe. I have fworn by myfelf, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteourness, and fhall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteoufness and strength; even to him ' shall men come, and all that are incensed against him 'shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Ifrael be justified, and shall glory.' They should profels to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the children of Ifrael, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God; Deut. xxvi. 17. 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy · God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice." They ought to profess a willingues of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God univerfally and perfeveringly; Exod. xix. 8. and xxiv. 3. 7. Deut. xxvi. 16. 17. 18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Neh. x. 28. 29. Ffal. cxix: 57: 106. They ought to profess, that all their hearts and fouls are in these engagements tobe the Lord's, and for ever to ferve him; 2 Chron. xv. 12. r3. 14. God's people swearing to God, and fwearing by his name, or to his name, as it might be rendered, (by which feems to be fignified their folemnly giving up themselves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him), is spoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's visible Israel; Deut. vi. 13. and x. 20. Pfal. Ixiii. 11. If. xix. 18. chap. xlv. 23. 24. compared with Rom. xiv. 11. and Phil. ii. 10. 11, If. xlviii. 1. 2. and lxv. 15. 16. Jer. iv. 2. and v. 7. and xii. 16. Hof. iv. 15. and x. 4. Therefore, in order to persons being intitled to full esteem and charity, with their neighbours, as being fincere professors of Christianity; by those forementioned rules of Christ and his M m 3 apostles,

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apostles, there must be a visibly holy life, with a profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such things as those which have been now mentioned. We are to know them by their fruits, that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profess to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have something in them, they do not so much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That profession of these things, which is properly called a Christian profession, and which must be joined with Christian practice, in order to persons being entitled to the benefit of those rules, must be made (as to what appears) understandingly: that is, they must be persons that appear to have been so far instructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to understand the proper import of what is expressed in their profession. For sounds are no significations or declarations of any thing, any further than men under-

stand the meaning of their own founds.

But in order to persons making a proper profession of. Christianity, such as the sqripture directs to, and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their fociety; it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method, by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought and brought about those great effential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the scripture of any fuch way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians, requiring any such relation, in order to their receiving and treating others, as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purpoles, or of their first examining them, concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profession of the things wrought; but no account of the manner of. working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the scripture of any fach custom in the church of God, from Adam to the death of the apostle John.

I am far from faying, that it is not requifite that perfons should give any fort of account of their experiences.

to their brethren. For persons to profess those things wherein the effence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they experience those things. Thus. for perions folemnly to profess, that, in a sense and full conviction of their own utter finfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves, and their just desert of God's utter rejection and eternal wrath. without mercy, and the utter infusficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favour, they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jefus Christ, and his fatisfaction and tighteousness; that they do with all? their hearts believe the truth of the gospel of Chrift; and that in a full conviction and fense of his sufficiency: and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the: gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their fouls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their fins, and utterly renounce all fin, and give up. themselves wholly to Christ, willingly, subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and refolyed to have God for their whole and everlasting portion ;: and in a dependence on his promifes of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, felling all for this great treafure and future inheritance, and to comply with every; command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's fervice; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave: to them and love them as their brethren, and worthip and ferve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ: I fay, for persons solemnly to profess such things as: these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing, as: to:

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to profess that they are conscious to, or do experience

fuch things in their hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that persons giving an account of their experience of particular exercises of grace, with the times and circumstances, gives no advantage to others in forming a judgment of their state; or that persons may not fitly be inquired of concerning these in some cases, especially cases of great importance, where all possible satisfaction concerning persons piety is especially to be defired and sought after, as in the case of ordination or approbation of a minister. It may give advantage in forming a judgment, in several respects; and among others, in this, that hereby we may be better fatisfied, that the professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he does not make the profession in mere formality. In order to a profession of Christianity being accepted to any purpose, there ought to be good reason, from the circumstances of the profession, to think, that the professor does not make fuch a profession out of a mere customary compliance with a prescribed form, using words without any distinct meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous manner, asconfessions of faith are often subscribed; but that the professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own heart; otherwise his profesfion can be of no fignificance, and no more to be regarded than the found of things without life. But indeed (whatever advantage an account of particular exercises may give in judging of this) it must be owned, that the professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his teachers, and giving good proof of his sufficient knowledge, together with a practice agreeable to his profession, is the best evidence of this.

Nor do I suppose, but that, if a person that is inquired of about particular passages, times, and circumstances, of his Christian experience, among other things, seems to be able to give a distinct account of the manner of his first conversion, in such a method as has been frequentby observable in true conversion, so that things seem sen-

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fibly and distinctly to follow one another, in the order of time, according to the order of nature; it is an illustrating circumstance, that among other things adds lustre to the evidence he gives his brethren of the truth

of his experiences.

But the thing that I speak of as unscriptural, is the insisting on a particular account of the distinct method and steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed, in first bringing the soul into a state of salvation, as a thing requisite in order to receiving a professor into full charity as a real Christian; or so, as for the want of such relation, to disregard other things in the evidence persons give to their neighbours of their Christianity, that are vastly more important and effential.

Secondly, That we may rightly understand how Christian practice is the greatest evidence that others can have of the fincerity of a professing Christian, it is needful that what was faid before, shewing what Christian practice is, should be born in mind; and that it should be considered how far this may be visible to others. Merely that a professor of Christianity is what is commonly called an honest man, and a moral man, (i. e. we have no special transgression or iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a blot on his character), is no great evidence of the fincerity of his profeffion. This is not making his light thine before men. This is not that work and labour of love shewed towards. Christ's name, which gave the apostle such persuasion of the fincerity of the professing Hebrews, Heb. vi. 9. 10. It may be fo, that we may see nothing in a man, but that he may be a good man, there may appear nothing in his life and conversation inconsistent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great pofitive evidence that he is fo. But there may be great positive appearances of holiness in men's visible behaviour: their life may appear to be a life of the service of God: they may appear to follow the example of Jefus Christ; and come up in a great measure to those excellent rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew.

thew, and 12th of Romans, and many other parts of the New Testament: there may be a great appearance of their being universal in their obedience to Christ's commands and the rules of the gospel. They may appear to be univerfal in the performance of the duties of the first table, manifesting the fear and love of God: and also universal in fulfilling rules of love to men, love to faints, and love to enemies: rules of meekness and forgiveness, rules of mercy and charity, and looking not only at our own things, but also at the things of others; rules of doing good to men's fouls and bodies, to particular persons and to the public; rules of temperance and mortification, and of an humble conversation; rules of bridling the tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bless men, shewing that in their tongues is the law They may appear to walk as Christians, of kindness. in all places, and at all feafons, in the house of God, and in their families, and among their neighbours, on Sabbath-days, and every day, in business and in converfation, towards friends and enemies, towards fuperiors, inferiors, and equals. Persons in their visible walk may appear to be very earnestly engaged in the fervice of God and mankind, much to labour and lay out themfelves in this work of a Christian, and to be very constant and stedfast in it, under all circumstances and temptations. There may be great manifestations of a spirit to deny themselves, and suffer for God and Christ, and the interest of religion, and the benefit of their brethren. There may be great appearances in a man's walk, of a disposition to forsake any thing, rather than to forfake Christ, and to make every thing give place to his honour. There may be great manifestations in a man's behaviour of fuch teligion as this being his element, and of his placing the delight and happinels of his life in it; and his conversation may be such, that he may carry with him a fweet odour of Christian graces and heavenly dispositions, wherever he goes. when it is thus in the professors of Christianity, here is an evidence to others of their fincerity in their profes-

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flon, to which all other manifestations are not worthy

to be compared.

There is doubtless a great variety in the degrees of evidence that professors do exhibit of their sincerity, in their life and practice; as there is a variety in the fairness and clearness of accounts persons give of the manner and method of their experiences: but undoubtedly fuch a manifestation as has been described, of a Christian spirit in practice, is vastly beyond the fairest and brightelt story of particular steps and passages of experience that ever was told. And in general, a manifestation of the fincerity of a Christian profession in practice, is far better than a relation of experiences.

But yet,

Thirdly, It must be noted, agreeable to what was formerly observed, that no external manifestations and outward appearances whatfoever, that are visible to the world, are infallible evidences of grace. These manifestations that have been mentioned, are the best that mankind can have; and they are fuch as do oblige Christians entirely to embrace professors as saints, and love them and rejoice in them as the children of God, and are fufficient to give them as great fatisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their conduct, or for any intent and purpose that needs to be answered in this world, But nothing that appears to them in their neighbour, can be fussicient to beget an absolute certainty concerning the state of his soul: for they see not his heart, nor can they see all his external behaviour; for much of it is in secret, and hid from the eye of the world: and it is impossible certainly to determine, how far a man may go in many external appearances and imitations of grace, from other principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could fee fo much of what belongs to men's practice, as their own consciences may fee of it, it might be an infallible evidence of their state, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus considered Christian practice as the best

evidence of the fincerity of professors to others, I now

proceed,

2. To observe, that the scripture also speaks of Chrisrian practice as a diffinguishing and sure evidence of grace to persons own consciences. This is very plain in I John ii. 3. 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' And the teftimony of our conferences, with respect to our good deeds, is spoken of as that which may give us affurance of our own godliness; I John iii. 18. 19. ' My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our ' hearts before him.' And the apostle Paul, in Heb. vi. speaks of the work and labour of love, of the Christian Hebrews, as that which both gave him a perfuasion that they had fomething above the highest common illuminations, and also as that evidence which tended to give them the highest affurance of hope concerning themselves; ver. 9. &c. ' But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany falvation, though we thus fpeak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have " ministered to his faints, and do minister. And we * defire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full affurance of hope unto the end.' So the apostle directs the Galatians to examine their behaviour or practice, that they might have rejoicing in themselves in their own happy state; Gal. vi. 4. ' Let every man prove his own work, fo shall he have res joicing in himself, and not in another.' And the pfalmift fays, Pfal. cxix. 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments;' i. e. then I shall be bold, and affured, and stedfast in my hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 19. 20. ' Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.' Though Christ gives

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gives this, firstly, as a rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the words that next follow he plainly shews, that he intends it also as a rule by which we should judge ourselves; ' Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Many will fay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, &c. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, wholoever heareth these fayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wife man which built his house upon a rock. ----- And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the fand.' I shall have occasion to mention other texts that shew the same thing, hereafter,

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But for the greater clearness in this matter, I would, first, shew how Christian practice, doing good works, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure sign to our own consciences, that we are real Christians. And, secondly, will prove, that this is the chief of all evidences that men can have of their own sincere godliness.

First, I would shew how Christian practice, or keeping Christ's commandments, is to be taken, when the scripture represents it as a sure evidence to our own

consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose, that when the scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments, that it has respect merely to what is external, or the motion and action of the body, without including any thing else, having no respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider men's actions so, and they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as the actions of the men, or any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience nor disobedience, any more than the motions of the body

But the obedience and fruit that is in a convulsion. spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man; and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the foul, confisting in the acts and practice of the foul. Not that I suppose, that when the scripture speaks, in this case, of gracious works, and fruit, and practice, that in these expressions is included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: because then, in these things being given as figns of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercife, and holy act of the foul is meant, and given as the fign of the holy principle and good estate. Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the foul, and exertion of inward holiness, which there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the foul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here, for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are those that some call immanent acts; that is, those exercises of grace that remain within the foul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to any thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the faints often have in contemplation; when the exercise that is in the heart, does not directly proceed to, or terminate in any thing beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as all exercises of grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another kind of acts of grace, that are more strictly called practical, or effective exercises, because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a faint

faint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures perfecution in the way of his duty, immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive of good works, not only in this fense, that they are of a productive nature, (for so are all exercises of true grace), but they are the producing acts. This is properly the exercise of grace in the act of the will; and this is properly the practice of the foul. And the foul is the immediate actor of no other practice but this: the motions of the body follow from the laws of union between the foul and body, which God, and not the foul has fixed and does maintain. The act of the foul, and the exercife of grace, that is exerted in the performance of a good work, is the good work itself, so far as the soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the foul's good work. The determinations of the will are indeed our very actions, fo far as they are properly ours, as Dr Doddridge observes *. In this practice of the soul, is included the aim and intention of the foul, which is the agent. For not only should we not look on the motions of a statue, doing justice or distributing alms by clock-work, as any acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would any body call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and materially agreeable to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did.——If the acts of obedience and good fruits spoken of, be looked upon, not as mere motions of the body, but as acts of the foul; the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind, in the action, must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, &c. otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or fervice done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these that I have now de-Nn 2 fcribed.

^{*} Scripture doctrine of salvation, ser mon I. p. 11-

fcribed, many of the martyrs have experienced in a high degree. And all true faints live a life of such acts of grace as these; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which these operative exertions of grace are the life and soul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the soul, more than the body; as much as the soul, in the constitution of the human nature, is the superior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he ooks at the practice of the soul; for the soul is the man in God's sight, 'For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for

he looketh on the heart.'

And thus it is, that obedience, good works, good fruits, are to be taken, when given in scripture as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace: even as including the obedience and practice of the foul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given in scripture as the main evidence of our true Christianity to others, then is meant that in our practice which is visible to them, even our outward actions: but when practice is given as a fure evidence of our real Christianity to our own consciences, then is meant that in our practice which is visible to our own consciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion and exercise of the foul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own consciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of the scripture, not only does the nature and reason of the thing shew, but it is plain by the scripture itself. Thus it is evident, that when Christ, at the conclusion of his fermion on the mount, fpeaks of doing or practifing thefe fayings of his, as the grand fign of professors being true disciples, without which he likens them to a man that built his house upon the fand, and with which, to a man that built his house upon a rock; he has a respect, not only to the outward behaviour, but to the inward exercise of the mind in that behaviour: as is evident by observing what those preceding

preceding fayings of his are that he refers to, when he speaks of our doing or practifing them; and we shall find they are fuch as these; ' Blessed are the poor in fpirit; bleffed are they that mourn; bleffed are the meek; bleffed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; blessed are the merciful; blessed are the pure in heart; who foever is angry with his brother without a cause, &c.; whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, &c.; love your enemies; take ' no thought for your life,' and others of the like nature, which imply inward exercises: and when Christ fays, John xiv. 2. ' He that hath my commandments, ' and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;' he has evidently a special respect to that command several times repeated in the same discourse, (which he calls, by way of eminence, his commandment), that they should love one another, as he had loved them; (fee chap. xiii. 34. 35. and chap. xv. 10. 12. 13. 14.) But this command respects chiefly an exercise of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the apostle John says, I John ii. 3. ' Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments; 'he has plainly a principal respect to the same command, as appears by what follows, ver. 7.-11. and 2d Epist. ver. 5. 6.: and when we are told in scripture that men shall at the last day be judged according to their works, and all shall receive according to the things done in the body; it is not to be understood only of outward acts; for if fo, why is God fo often spoken of as searching the hearts and trying the reins, that he may render to every one according to his works? as Rev. ii. 23. And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one according to his works, Jer. xvii. 9, 10., I the Lord · fearch the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of ' his doings.' But if by his ways, and the fruit of his doings, is meant only the actions of his body, what need of fearching the heart and reins in order to know them? Hezekiah in his sickness pleads his practice as N.D 3

an evidence of his title to God's favour, as including, not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart, If. xxxviii. 3. Remember now, O Lord, I befeech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a

perfect heart.'

Though in this great evidence of fincerity that the scripture gives us, what is inward is of greatest importance; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretentions that any man can have to evidences of godliness, who externally lives wickedly; because the great evidence lies in that inward exercise and practice of the soul, which confills in the act of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known, that these commanding acts of the will are not one way, and the actions of the bodily organs another: for the unalterable law of nature is, that they should be united, as long as foul and body are united, and the organs are not so destroyed as to be incapable of those motions that the foul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public worthip, while his feet carry him to a tavern or brothelhouse; or that the commanding act of his will was to give fuch a piece of money he had in his hand to a poor beggar, while his hand at the same instant kept it back, and held it fast.

Secondly, I proceed to shew, that Christian practice, taken in the fense that has been explained, is the chief of all the evidences of a faving fincerity in religion, to the consciences of the professors of it; much to be preferred to the method of the first convictions, enlightenangs, and comforts in conversion, or any immanent difcoveries or exercises of grace whatsoever, that begin and end in contemplation *. The evidence of this ap-

pears by the following arguments.

Argument

[&]quot; Look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple and bo-Com companien; he had received the anointing to know

Argument I. Reason plainly shews, that those things which put it to the proof what men will actually cleave to and prefer in their practice, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as has been observed already, consists in setting God highest in the heart, in chusing him before other things, in having a heart to sell all for Christ, &c.—But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's

him that is true, and he knew that he knew him, 3 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? He might be deceived; (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it; as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God); what is his last proof? ' because we keep his commandments.' Shepard's Parable, Part I.p. 133.

"A man may know his present union to the Lord Jesus, by a work; I John ii. 4. "He that faith I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a siar."—Yes, that is true negatively; but may a man, ought a man, to see or know his union positively by this? Ans. ver. 5. Many said they did know and love the Lord, but he that keeps his words—O they are sweet! It is heaven to cleave to him in every command; it is death to depart from any command; hereby know we that we are in him. If it were possible to ask of angels how they know they are not devile, they would answer, The Lord's will is our's. Shepard's Parable, Part L. D. 124.

I. p. 134.

"If the question be, Whom doth the Lord Jesus love? you need not go to heaven for it, the word is nigh thee, Those that love Christ. Who are those? Those that keep his commandments." Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 138.

will you have Christ hit in heaven, and not look that he subdue your lusts by the work of his grace, and so sway your hearts? You despise his kingdom then. Do you seek for pardon in the blood of Christ, and never look for the virtue and end of that blood to wash you and make you without spot, &c.? You despise his priesthood and blood then. Do you look for Christ to do work for you, and you not do Christ's work, and bring forth fruit to him? You despise his honour then, John xv. 8. If I were to discover a hypocrite, or a false heart, this I would say, it is he that shall set up Christ, but loath his works. Shepard's Parable, Part I. p. 140.

heart prefers. As for instance, when it is so that God and other things come to stand in competition, God is as it were fet before a man on one hand, and his worldly interest or pleasure on the other, (as it often is so in the course of a man's life), his behaviour in such case, in actually cleaving to the one and forfaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity confifts in forfaking all for Christ in heart; but to forfake all for Christ in heart, is the very fame thing as to have an heart to forfake all for Christ: but certainly the proper trial whether a man has an heart to forfake all for Christ, is his being actually put to it, the having Christ and other things coming in competition, that he must actually or practically cleave to one and forfake the To forfake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart to forfake all for Christ when called to it: but the highest proof to ourselves and others, that we have an heart to forfake all for Christ when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or fo far as called to it. To follow Christ in heart, is to have an heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in heart for Christ, is the same thing as to have an heart to deny ourselves for him in fact. The main and most proper proof of a man's having an heart to any thing, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleases, is his doing of it. When a man is at liberty whether to speak or keep silence, the most proper evidence of his having an heart to speak, is his speaking. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or fit still, the proper proof of his having an heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in an heart to intend to do the will of God, but in an heart to do it. The children of Israel in the wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27. 28. 29. Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall fay; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord

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faid unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! The people manifested that they had a heart to intend to keep God's commandments, and to be very sorward in those intentions; but God manifests, that this was far from being the thing that he desired, wherein true god-liness consists, even an heart actually to keep them.

It is therefore exceeding abfurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of universal holiness in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that such men do not love God above all. It is foolish to dispute against plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of fin, and yet flatter themselves that they shall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy persons, without a holy life and practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the apostle fays, (speaking of men's doing good works, and living an holy life, thereby exhibiting evidence of their title to everlasting life), Gal. vi. 7. ' Be not deceived; God ' is not mocked; for whatfoever a man fowerh, that ' shall he also reap.' As much as to say, 'Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter, if you do not fow to the Spirit here; it is in vain to think that God will be made a 'fool of by you, that he will be shammed and baffled with shadows instead of substance, and with vain pretences, instead of that good fruit which he expects, when the contrary to what you pretend appears plain-'ly in your life, before his face.' In this manner the word mock is sometimes used in scripture. Thus Delilah fays to Samson, ' Behold, thou hast mocked me, ' and told me lies,' Judges xvi. 10. 13. i. e. ' Thou half baffled me, as though you would make a fool of me,

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" me, as if I might be easily turned off with any vain pretence, instead of the truth.' So it is said that Lot, when he told his sons-in-law that God would destroy that place, 'he seemed as one that mocked, to his sons-' in-law,' Gen. xix. 14. i. e he feemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were such credulous fools as to regard fuch bugbears. But the great Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretences, without a holy life. If in his name men have prophesied and wrought miracles, and have had faith, so that they could remove mountains, and cast out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great refemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding place has been fo dark and deep, that no human skill nor search could find them out; yet if they are workers or practifers of iniquity, they cannot hide their hypocrify from their Judge: Job xxxiv. z2. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where • the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' Would a wife prince fuffer himself to be fooled and baffled by a subject, who should pretend that he was a loyal subject, and should tell his prince that he had an entire affection to him, and that at fuch and fuch a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time ftirring up fedition against him? or would a master suffer himself to be shammed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences ef love and honour towards him in his heart, and a great fense of his worthiness and kindness to him, when at the same time he refused to obey him, and he could get no fervice done by him?

Argument II. As reason shews, that those things which occur in the course of life, that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in prac-

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tice, are the proper trial of the uprightness and fincerity of their hearts; so the same are represented as the proper trial of the fincerity of professors in the scripture. There we find that fuch things are called by that very name, trials or temptations, (which I before observed are both words of the fame fignification). The things that put it to the proof, whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur that make the practice of duty difficult and cross to other principles besides the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both fet before men together, for their actual and practical choice; and it comes to this, that we cannot hold to both, but one or the other must be forfaken. And these things are all over the scripture called by the name of trials or proofs *. And they are called by this name, because hereby professors are tried and proved of what fort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the reality of a supreme love to God is brought to the test of experiment and fact; they are the proper proofs in which it is truly determined by experience, whether men have a thorough disposition of heart to cleave to God or no; Deut. viii. 2. 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee thefe forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to ' prove thee, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no, Judges ii. 21, 22. I also will not hence-' forth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Ifrael, whether they will keep the way of the Lord. So chap. iii. 1. 4. and Exod. xvi. 4. The

^{* 2} Cor. viii. 2. Heb. xi. 36. I Pet. i. 7 chap. iv. 12. Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. viii. 2. 16. chap. xiii. 3. Exod. xv. 25. chap. xvi. 4. Judges ii. 22. chap. iii. 1. 4. Pfal. lxvi. 10. 11. Dan. xii. 10. Rev. iii 10. Job xxiii. 10. Zech. xiii. 9. James i. 12. Rev. ii. 10. Luke viii. 13. Acts xx. 19. James i. 2, 3. I Pet. i. 6.

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The scripture, when it calls these difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itfelf to mean' thereby the trial or experiment of their faith, James i. 2. 3. 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. I Pet. i. 6. 7. Now, for a feason ye are in heaviness, thro manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold, &c.' So the apostle Paul speaks of that expensive duty of parting with our substance to the poor, as the proof of the sincerity of the love of Christians, 2 Cor. viii. 8. And the difficulties of religion are often represented in scripture, as being the trial of professors, in the same manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and filver, Pfal. lxvi. 10. 11. 'Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us as filver is tried: thou broughteft us into the net, thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Ech. xiii. 9. And I will bring the third part of them through the fire; and I will refine them as filver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried.' That which has the colour and appearance of gold, is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it feems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, because they try those that have the profession and appearance of saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real faints.

If we put true gold into the furnace, we shall find its great value and preciousness; so the truth and inestimable value of the virtues of a true Christian appear when under these trials; I Pet. i. 7. 'That the trial 'of your faith, being much more precious than of gold 'that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and homour, and glory.' True and pure gold will come out of the surnace in sull weight: so true saints, when tried, come forth as gold, Job xxiii. 10. Christ distinguishes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is gold tried in the fire, Rev. iii. 17. 18. So that it is evident, that these things are called trials in scripture, principally as they

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they try or prove the fincerity of professors. And, from what has now been observed, it it is evident, that they are the most proper trial, or proof, of their fincerity; inalmuch as the very meaning of the word trial, as it is ordinarily used in scripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a professor's duty, as the trial or experiment of his fincerity. If trial of fincerity be the proper name of these difficulties of religion, then, doubtless, these difficulties of religion are properly and eminently the trial of fincerity; for they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And, if it be fo, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof, or experiment of the fincerity of professors; then certainly the result of the trial or experiment, (that is, perfons behaviour or practice under fuch trials), is the proper and eminent evidence of their fincerity; for they are called trials or proofs, only with regard to the refult, and because the effect is eminently the proof, or evidence. And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the conscience of those that are the subjects of these trials. For, when God is said by these things to try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no; we are not to understand, that it is for his own information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their fincerity; (for he needs no trials for his information); but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences *.

Thus, when God is faid to prove Ifrael by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in Canaan,

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^{*&}quot; I am persuaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men are to shew them to themselves, and to the world, that they be but counterseits; and to make saints known to themselves the better.—Rom. v. 5. Tribulation works trial, and that hope. Prov. xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you." Shepard's parable, Part I. p. 191.

to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments, or no; it must be understood, that it was to discover them to themselves, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God tempted or tried Abraham with that difficult command of offering up his fon, it was not for his fatisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for Abraham's own greater fatisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favour of God to him. When A. braham had proved faithful under this trial, God fays to him. Now, I know that thou fearest God, feeing thou hast not with-held thy son, thine only son, from me? Which plainly implies, that, in this practical exercise of Abraham's grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to Abraham's conscience; because God himself gives it to Abraham as fuch, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience of his being upright in the fight of his Judge. Which proves what I fay, that holy practice, under trials, is the highest evidence of the sincerity of professors to their own consciences. And we find that Christ, from time to time, took the same method to convince the consciences of those that pretended friendship to him, and to shew them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, Matth. xix. 16. &c. He feemed to flew a great respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him Good Master, and made a great profession of obedience to the commandments; but Christ tried him, by bidding him go and fell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his crofs and follow him; telling him, that then he should have treasure in heaven. So he tried another that we read of, Matth. viii. 20. He made a great profession of respect to Christ: says he, Lord, I will follow thee whitherfoever thou goeft. Christ immediately puts his friendship to the proof, by telling him, that the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests,

And thus Christ is wont still to try professed disciples in general, in his providence. So the seed sown, in every kind of ground, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which, in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the difference made to ap-

pear, by the burning heat of the fun.

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Seeing, therefore, that these are the things that God makes use of to try us, it is undoubtedly the furest way for us to pass a right judgment on ourselves, to try ourfelves by the same things. These trials of his are not for his information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The furest way to know our gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that end, that we may fee what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building flands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat, has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must obferve it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten broken reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales, that he makes use of to weigh us *. These trials, in the course of our prac-002

* Dr Sibbs, in his bruifed reed, fays, "When Chrift's will cometh in competition with any worldly loss or gain, yet, if then, in that particular case, the heart will stoop to Christ, it is a true sign. For the truest trial of the power of grace, is in such particular cases as touch us nearest; for there our corruption maketh the greatest head. When Christ came home to the young man in the gospel, he lost a disciple of him."

Mr Flavel speaks of a holy practice under trials, as the greatest evidence of grace. "No man (says he) can say what he is, whether his graces be true or false, until they he tried and examined by those things, which are to them as fire is to gold." Touchstone of sincerity, chap. 4. sect. 1.

weighed, or in which Christ and the world, or Christ and his competitors, as to the esteem and regard they have in our hearts are weighed, or are put into opposite scales,

Again, speaking of great difficulties and sufferings in the way of duty, wherein a person must actually part with what is dearest of a worldly nature, or with his duty; he fays, 44 That fuch fufferings as these will discover the falseness and rottenness of mens hearts, cannot be doubted; if you confider, that this is the fire defigned by God for this very use and purpose, to separate the gold from the dross. So you will find it, I Pet. iv. 12. "Beloved, think it not strange " concerning the fiery trial that is to try you," i. e. The very defign and aim of Providence in permitting and ordering them, is to try you. Upon this account you find the hour of perfecution (in a fuitable notion) called the hour of temptation, or probation, Rev. iii. 10. For then professors are fifted to the very bran, fearched to the very bottom prinples. This is "the day that burns as an oven; all that do wickedly shall be as stubble," Mal. iv. I. For, in that day, the predominant interest must appear and be discovered, it can be concealed no longer. "No man can ferve "two masters," saith Christ, Luke xvi. 13. A man may serve many masters, if they all command the same thing, or things subordinate to each other: but he cannot serve two mafters, if their commands clash and interfere with each other: and such are the commands of Christ and the flesh in a fuffering hour:-thus the two interests come in full oppofition. And now, have but patience and wait a little, and you will discern which is predominant. A dog follows two men, while they both walk one way, and you know not which of the two is his mafter: ftay but a little, until their path parts, and then you shall quickly see who is his master : to it is in this case. And, in another chapter, he says, "Great numbers of persons are deceived and destroyed by truffing to feeming untried grace. This was the miserable condition of the Laodicean professors: they reckoned themfelves rich, but were really poor: all is not gold that glisters: their gold (as they accounted it) was never tried in the fire. If a man's whole estate lay in some precious stone, suppose a rich diamond, how is he concerned to have it thoroughly tried, to fee whether it will bear a smart stroke with the hammer, or fly like a Bristol diamond!" ibid.

by which there is opportunity to fee which preponderates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Christ, and the other to the objects of his lufts, to fee which way he will go, or is brought, and as it were fet between Christ and the world. Christ on the right hand, and the world on the left, fo that, if he goes to one, he must leave the other, to fee which his heart inclines most to, or which preponderates in his heart; this is just the fame thing as laying Christ and the world in two opposite scales: and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is just the same thing as the finking of one scale, and rising of the other, A man's practice, therefore, under the trials of God's providence, are as much the proper experiment and evidence of the superior inclination of his heart, as the motion of the balance, with different weights, in opposite scales, is the proper experiment of the superior weight.

Argument III. Another argument, that holy practice, in the fense which has been explained, is the highest kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the consciences of Christians, is, that in practice, grace, in scripture style, is said to be made perfect, or to be finished. So the apostle James says, James ii. 22. 'Seest Oo3 'thou

chap. x. sect. 3. Again, in the same place, "The promises of salvation are made over to tried grace, and that only as will endure the trial."

"The Lord will try you. God hath his trying times: and they were never sent, but to discover who were dross, who were gold. And the main end of all God's trials, is to discover this truth that I now am pressing upon you. Some have a thorough work; and now the trial discovers the truth, as in Abraham, Heb. xi. 17. Some have a fuperficial work, and they fall in trial, as in Saul: and it doth discover it was but an overly work. For this is the question God makes, Is it thorough, or no? Ay, faith the carnal heart; Yes, faith a gracious heart. Hence it is strange to see what men will do when a trial comes." Shepard's parable, Part I. p. 219.

"There is an hour of temptation which tries men, which will discover men indeed, Shepard's parable, Part II.p. 60.

thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect, or finished?' (as the word in the original properly fignifies). So the love of God is faid to be made perfect, or finished, in keeping his commandments; I John ii. 4, 5. 'He that faith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him: but, whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.' The commandment of Christ, which the apostle has especialrespect to, when he here speaks of our keeping his commandments, is (as I observed before) that great commandment of his, which respects deeds of love to our brethren, as appears by the following verses. Again, the love of God is faid to be perfected in the same sense, chap. iv. 12. 'If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.' Here, doubtlefs, the apostle has still respect to loving one another, in the same manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, speaking of loving one another, as a sign of the love of God, ver. 17. 18. 'Whoso hath this world's goods, and shutteth up his bowels, &c. how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, · let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, (or in work), and in truth. By thus loying in work, the apostle says, the love of God is perfected in us." Grace is faid to be perfected or finished in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency and defign of grace herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. As the tree is made perfect in the fruit; it is not perfected in the feed's being planted in the ground; it is not perfected in the first quickening of the feed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth bloffoms: but, when it has brought forth good ripe fruit, then it is perfected, therein it reaches its end, the design of the tree is finished: all that belongs to the tree is completed and brought to

tits proper effect in the fruit. So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made persect or sinished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, James i. 15. 'When lust hath conceived, it 'bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is sinished, bring'eth forth death.' Here are three steps; first, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and nextly, here is its conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and lastly, here is the fruit that was conceived actually, brought forth in the wicked work and practice. And this the apostle calls the sinishing or persecting of sin: for the word, in the original, is the same that is translated persected in those

forementioned places.

Now, certainly if it be fo, if grace be in this manner made perfect in its fruit, if these practical exercises of grace are those exercises wherein grace is brought to its proper effect and end, and the exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its delign, tendency, and operation, is completed and crowned; then these exercises must be the highest evidences of grace, above all other exercises. Certainly the proper nature and tendency of every principle must appear best and most fully in its most perfect exercifes, or in those exercifes wherein its nature is most completely exerted, and in its tendency most fully anfwered and crowned, in its proper effect and end. If we would fee the proper nature of any thing whatfoever, and fee it in its full distinction from other things; let us look upon it in the finishing of it. The apostle James fays, by works is faith made perfect; and introduces this as an argument to prove, that works are the chief evidence of faith, whereby the fincerity of the professors of faith is justified, James ii. And the apostle John, after he had once and again told us that love was made perfect in keeping Christ's commandments, obferves, 1 John iv. 18. That perfect love casseth out fear: meaning (at least in part) love made perfect in this sense; agreeable to what he had faid in the foregoing chapter, That, by loving in deed, or work, we know that we

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Argument IV. Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the principal evidence that we ought to make use of in judging both of our own and others fincerity, is, that this evidence is above all others infifted on in scripture. A common acquaintance with the scripture, together with a little attention and observation, will be sufficient to shew to any one, that this is ten times more infifted on as a note of true piety, throughout the scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, than any thing else. And, in the New Testament, where Christ and his apo-Itles do expressly, and of declared purpose, lay down figns of true godliness, this is almost wholly insisted on. It may be observed, that Christ, and his apostles, do not only often fay those things, in their discoursing on the great doctrines of religion, which do shew what the nature of true godliness must be, or from whence the nature and figns of it may be inferred by just consequence, and often occasionally mention many things which do appertain to godliness; but they do also often, of set purpose, give figns and marks for the trial of professors, putting them upon trying themselves by the figns they give, introducing what they fay with fuch-like expreffions as thefe: 'By this you shall know, that you know God: By this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil: He that hath this builds on a good foundation; he that hath it not, builds on the fand: Hereby we shall assure our hearts: He is the man that loveth Christ, &c.' But I can find no place, where either Christ or his apostles do, in this manner, give figns of godliness, (though the places are many), but where Christian practice is almost the only thing infifted on. Indeed, in many of these places, love to the brethren is spoken of as a sign of godlines; and, as I have observed before, there is no one virtuous affection, or disposition, so often expressly spoken of as a sign of true grace, as our having love one to another; but then

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the scriptures explain themselves to intend chiefly this love as exercised and expressed in practice, or in deeds of love. So does the apostle John, who, above all others. infifts on love to the brethren as a fign of godliness, most expressly explain himself, in that I John iii. 14. &c. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death-Whoso hath this world's 'good, and feeth his brother have need, and shutteth op his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us love, onot in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, (i. e. in deeds of love), and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall affure our hearts be-' fore him.' So that, when the scripture so much infifts on our loving one another, as a great fign of godlinefs, we are not thereby to understand the immanent workings of affection which men feel one to another, fo much as the foul's practifing all the duties of the fecond table of the law; all which the New Testament tells us again and again, a true love one to another comprehends; Rom. xiii. 8. and 10. Gal. v. 14. Matth. xxii. 39. 40. So that, really there is no place in the New Testament where the declared defign is to give figns of godlinefs, but that holy practice, and keeping Christ's commandments, is the mark chosen out from all others to be infisted on. Which is an invincible argument, that it is the chief of all the evidences of godliness: unless we suppose that, when Christ and his apostles on design set themselves about this business of giving signs, by which professing Christians, in all ages, might determine their state; they did not know how to choose figns so well as we could have chosen for them. But, if we make the word of Christ our rule, then undoubtedly those marks which Christ and his apostles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourselves by them, those same marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to make use of, in the trial of ourfelves

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felves *. And furely those things, which Christ and his apostles chiefly insisted on in the rules they gave, ministers ought chiefly to infift on in the rules they give. To infift much on those things that the scripture infifts little on, and to infift very little on those things on which the scripture infifts much, is a dangerous thing; because it is going out of God's way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide others, in an unscriptural manner. God knew which way of leading and guiding fouls was fafelt and best for them: he insisted so much on some things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be infifted on; and let other things more alone as a wife God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the weight of the trial there. As the Sabbath was made for man, so the scriptures were made for man; and they are, by infinite wifdom, fitted for out use and benefit. We should, therefore, make them our guide in all things, in our thoughts of religion, and of ourselves. And for us to make that great which the scripture makes little, and that little which the scripture makes great, tends to give us a monstrous idea of religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right rule, and from a right opinion of ourselves, and to establish delusion and hypocrify.

Argument V. Christian practice is plainly spoken of in the word of God, as the main evidence of the truth of grace, not only to others, but to men's own consciences. It is not only more spoken of and insisted on than other signs, but in many places where it is spoken of, it is represented as the chief of all evidences. This is plain in the manner of expression from time to time. If God were now to speak from heaven to resolve our doubts concerning

[&]quot;It is a fure rule, fays Dr Prefton, that, what the fcriptures bestow much words on, we should have much thoughts on; and, what the Holy Ghost urgeth most, we should prize most." Church's Carriage.

concerning figns of godliness, and should give some particular fign, that by it all might know whether they were fincerely godly or not, with fuch emphatical expressions as these, the man that has such a qualification or mark, ' that is the man that is a true faint, that is the very man, by this you may know, this is the thing by which it is manifest who are faints and who are finners, fuch men as these are saints indeed; should not we look upon it as a thing beyond doubt, that this was given as a special, and eminently distinguishing note of true godlines? But this is the very case with respect to the sign of grace I am speaking of; God has again and again uttered himself in his word in this very manner, concerning Christian practice, as John xiv. he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' Thus Christ in this place gives to the disciples, not so much to guide them in judging of others, but to apply to themselves for their own comfort after his departure, as appears by every word of the context. And by the way I would observe, that not only the emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much infifting on, and repeating the matter, as he does in the context,; ver. 15. ' If ye love me, keep my command-' ments. Ver 23. If a man love me, he will keep my And ver. 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my fayings. And in the next chapter over and over; ver. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not ' fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it. Ver. 8. Herein is my Father glo-' rified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my difciples. Ver 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatto-' ever I command you. We have this mark laid down ' with the same emphasis again, John viii. 31. If ye ' continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And again, 1 John ii. 3. hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 'And ver. 5. Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that

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we are in him. And chap. iii. 18. 19. let us love in deed, and in truth; hereby we know that we are of the truth.' What is translated hereby, would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the original, By this we do know. And how evidently is holy practice spoken of as the grand note of distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil, in ver. 10, of the same chapter? In this the children of God are manifest, and ' the children of the devil.' Speaking of a holy, and a wicked practice, as may be feen in all the context; as ver. 3. ' Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Ver. 6 .- 10. Whofoever abideth in him, finneth not; who foever finneth, hath not feen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteoufnels, is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that committeth fin, is of the devil.—Wholoever is born of God, finneth not.-Whosoever doth not righteouse nels, is not of God. So we have the like emphalis, 2 John 6. This is love, that we walk after his commandments; that is, (as we must understand it), this is the proper evidence of love. So 1 John v. 3. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' So the apostle James speaking of the proper evidences of true and pure religion, fays, Jam. i. 27. ' Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' We have the like emphatical expressions used about the same thing in the Old Testament; Job xxviii. 28. ' And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that 'is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. ' Jer. xxii. 15. 16. Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice?—He judged the cause of the poor and needy; was not this to know me? faith the Lord. Pfal. xxxiv. 11. &c. Come, ye children, unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from · Speaking

fpeaking guile; depart from evil, and do good; feek peace and pursue it.' Psal. xv. at the beginning, 'Who 'shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? he that walketh uprightly, &c. Psal. xxiv. 3. 4. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and 'who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, &c. Psal. cxix. 1. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Ver. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when 'I have respect to all thy commandments. Prov. viii.

13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.'

So the scripture never uses such emphatical expresfions concerning any other figns of hypocrify, and unfoundness of heart, as concerning an unholy practice. So Gal. vi. 7. ' Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatfoever a man foweth, that shall he also reap. 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God. Eph. v. 5. 6. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, &c. hath any inhe-'ritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. ono man deceive you with vain words. I John iii. 7. 8. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth fin, is of the devil. Chap. ii. 4. He that faith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. And chap, i. 6. If we fay that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the James i. 26. If any man among you feem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain, Chap. iii. 14. 15. If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, fenfual, devilish. Psal. cxxv. 5. As for fuch as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. If. xxxv. 8. An high way shall be there, and it shall

be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. Rev. xxi. 27. And there shall in no

wise enter into it, whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' And in many places, 'Depart from

me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity."

Argument VI. Another thing which makes it evident, that holy practice is the chief of all the figns of the fincerity of profesfors, not only to the world, but to their own consciences, is, that this is the grand evidence which will hereafter be made use of, before the judgment-feat of God; according to which his judgment will be regulated, and the state of every professor of religion unalterably determined. In the future judgment, there will be an open trial of professors; and evidences will be made use of in the judgment. For God's future judging of men, in order to their eternal retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and paffing a judgment upon the state of men's hearts, in his own mind; but it will be a declarative judgment; and the end of it will be, not God's forming a judgment within himself, but the manifestation of his judgment, and the righteousness of it, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore the day of judgment is called the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5. And the end of God's future trial and judgment of men, as to the part that each one in particular is to have in the judgment, will be especially the clear manifestation of God's righteous judgment, with respect to him, to his conscience; as is manifest by Matth. xviii. 31. to the end. Chap. xx. 8 .- 15. Chap. xxii. 11. 12. 13. Chap. xxv. 19 .- 30. and ver. 35. to the end. Luke xix. 15 .- 23. And therefore though God needs no medium, whereby to make the truth evident to himfelf, yet evidences will be made use of in his future judging of men. And doubtless the evidences that will be made use of in their trial, will be fuch as will be best fitted to serve the ends of the judgment; viz. the manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, not only to the world, but to men's own consciences.

sciences. But the scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand evidences which the Judge will make use of in the trial, for these ends, according to which the judgment of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible fentence passed, will be men's works, or practice, here in this world: Rev. xx. 12. ' And I faw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; -and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. So ver. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment feat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done ' in his body, whether it be good or bad.' So men's practice is the only evidence that Christ represents the future judgment as regulated by, in that most particular description of the day of judgment, which we have in the holy Bible, Matth. xxv. at the latter end. See also Rom. ii. 6. 13. Jer. xvii. 10. Job xxxiv. 11. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Rev. xxii. 12. Matth. xvi. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Ezek. xxxiii. 20. 1 Per. i. 17. The Judge at the day of judgment, will not (for the conviction of men's own consciences, and to manifest them to the world), go about to examine men, as to the method of their experiences, or fet every man to tell his story of the manner of his conversion; but his works will be brought forth, as evidences of what he is, what he has done in darkness and in light; Eccl. xii. 14. ' For God will bring every work into judgment, with every fecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' In the trial that professors shall be the subjects of, in the future judgment, God will make use of the same evidences, to manifest them to themselves and to the world, which he makes use of to manifest them, in the temptations or trials of his providence here, viz | their practice, in cases wherein Christ and other things come into actual and immediate competition, At the Pp2

day of judgment, God, for the manifestation of his righteous judgment, will weigh professors in a balance that is visible. And the balance will be the same that he weighs men in now, which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that men's works ftaken in the fense that has been explained) are the highest evidences by which they ought to try themselves. Certainly that which our supreme Judge will chiefly make use of to judge us by, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly make use of, to judge ourfelves by *. If it had not been revealed in what manner, and by what evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter, how natural would it be for one to fay, O that I knew what token God will chiefly look for and infift upon in the last and decifive judgment, and which he expects that all should be able to produce, who would then be accepted of him, and according to which fentence shall be passed; that I ' might know what token or evidence especially to look at and feek after now, as I would be fure not to fail then.' And feeing God has fo plainly and abundantly revealed what this token or evidence is, furely if we act wifely, we shall regard it as of the greatest importance.

Now from all that has been faid, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the gracious fincerity of professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the marks of grace, the sign of signs, and evidence of evidences, that which seals and crowns all other signs.——I had rather have the testimony of my conscience, that I have such a saying of my supreme Judge on my side, as that,

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^{* &}quot;That which God maketh a rule of his own judgment, as that by which he judgeth of every man, that is a fure rule for every man to judge himself by. That which we shall be judged by at the last day, is a sure rule to apply to ourselves for the present. Now by our obedience and works he judgeth us. "He will give to every man according to his works." Dr Preston's Church's Carriage.

John xiv. 21. ' He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; than the judgment and fullest approbation of all the wife, found, and experienced divines, that have lived this thousand years, on the most exact and critical examination of my experiences, as to the manner of my conversion. Not that there are no other good evidences of a state of grace but this. There may be other exercises of grace, besides these efficient exercises, which the saints may have in contemplation, that may be very fatisfying to them, but yet this is the chief and most proper evidence. There may be feveral good evidences that a. tree is a fig-tree; but the highest and most proper evidence of it is, that it actually bears figs. It is possible, that a man may have a good affurance of a state of grace, at his first conversion, before he has had opportunity to gain affurance, by this great evidence I am fpeaking of .- If a man hears that a great treasure is offered him, in a distant place, on condition that he will prize it fo much, as to be willing to leave what he poffesses at home, and go a journey for it, over the rocks and mountains that are in the way, to the place where it is; it is possible the man may be well assured, that he values the treasure to the degree spoken of, as soon as the offer is made him; he may feel a willingness to go for the treasure, within him, beyond all doubt; but yet, this does not hinder but that his actual going for it, is the highest and most proper evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an evidence to himself, his outward actions, and the motions of his body in his journey, are not considered. alone, exclusive of the action of his mind, and a consciousness within himself, of the thing that moves him, and the end he goes for; otherwise his bodily motion is no evidence to him, of his prizing the treasure. In fuch a manner is Christian practice the most proper evidence of a faving value of the pearl of great prize, and . treasure hid in the field.

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Christian practice is the sign of signs, in this sense, that it is the great evidence, which confirms and crowns all other figns of godliness. There is no one grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian practice is the most proper evidence of the truth of it. As it is with the members of our bodies, and all our utenfils, the proper proof of the foundness and goodness of them, is in the use of them; so it is with our graces, (which are given to be used in practice, as much as our hands and feet, or the tools with which we work, or the arms with which we fight), the proper trial and proof of them is in their exercise in practice. Most of the things we use are serviceable to us, and so have their ferviceableness proved, in some pressure, straining, agitation, or collifon. So it is with a bow, a fword, an ax, a faw, a cord, a chain, a staff, a foot, a tooth, &c. And they that are so weak, as not to bear the strain or presfure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So. it is with all the virtues of the mind. The proper trial and proof of them, is in being exercifed under those temptations and trials that God brings us under, in the course of his providence, and in being put to such fervice as strains hard upon the principles of nature.

Practice is the proper proof of the true and faving knowledge of God; as appears by that of the apostle already mentioned, 'hereby do we know that we know 'him, that we keep his commandments.' It is in vain for us to profess that we know God, if in works we deny him. Tit. i. 16. 'And if we know God, but glorify him not as God; our knowledge will only condemnus, and not fave us. Rom. i. 21. The great note of that knowledge which saves and makes happy, is, that it is practical; John xiii. 17. 'If ye know these things, 'happy are ye if ye do them. Job xxviii. 28. To

depart from evil is understanding."

Holy practice is the proper evidence of repentance. When the Jews professed repentance, when they came confessing their sins, to John, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; he directed them

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dences of the truth of their repentance, when he faid to them, 'Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Matth, 'iii. 8.' Which was agreeable to the practice of the apostle Paul; see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and mercy are from time to time promised to him who has this evidence of true repentance, that he forsakes his sin; Prov. xxviii. 12. and 11. lv. 7. and many other places.

Holy practice is the proper evidence of a faving faith. It is evident that the apostle James speaks of works, as what does eminently justify faith, or (which is the same thing) justify the professors of faith, and vindicate and manifest the fincerity of their profession, not only to the world, but to their own consciences; as is evident by the instance he gives of Abraham, Jam. ii. 21-24. And in ver. 20. and 26. he speaks of the practical and working nature of faith, as the very life and foul of it; in the same manner, that the active nature and substance, which is in the body of a man, is the life and foul of that. And if so, doubtless practice is the proper evidence of the life and foul of true faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead faith. For doubtless, practice is the most proper evidence of a practical nature, and operation the most proper evidence of an operative nature.

Practice is the best evidence of a saving belief of the truth. That is spoken of as the proper evidence of the truth's being in a professing Christian, that he walks in the truth, 3 John 3. 'I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in

thee, even as thou walkest in the truth."

Practice is the most proper evidence of a true coming to Christ, and accepting of, and closing with him. A true and saving coming to Christ, is (as Christ often teaches) a coming so as to forsake all for him. And, as was observed before, to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart actually to forsake all; but the proper evidence, of having a heart actually to forsake all, is, indeed, actually to forsake all so far as called.

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called to it. If a prince make fuit to a woman in a far country, that she would forfake her own people, and father's house, and come to him to be his bride; the proper evidence of the compliance of her heart with the king's fuit, is her actually forfaking her own people and father's house, and coming to him. By this her compliance with the king's fuit is made perfect, in the fame fense that the apostle James fays, By works is faith made perfect *. Christ promises us eternal life, on condition of our coming to him: but it is fuch a coming as he directed the young man to, who came to inquire what he shall do that he might have eternal life; Christ bid him go and fell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him. If he had confented in his heart to the proposal, and had therein come to Christ in his heart, the proper evidence of it would have been his doing of it; and therein his coming to Christ would have been made perfect. When Christ called Levi the publican. when fitting at the receipt of custom, and in the midst of his worldly gains; the closing of Levi's heart with this invitation of his Saviour to come to him, was manifested, and made perfect by his actually rising up, leaving all, and following him, Luke v. 27. 28. Chrift, and other things, are fet before us together, for us practically to cleave to one, and forfake the other: in fuch a case, a practical cleaving to Christ is a practical acceptance of Christ; as much as a beggar's reaching out his

^{* &}quot;Our real taking of Christ appears in our actions and works; Isa. i. 19. If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land. That is, If ye will consent to take JEHOVAH for your Lord and King: if ye give consent; there is the first thing: but that is not enough; but if ye also obey. The consent that standeth in the inward act of the mind, the truth of it will be seen in your obedience, in the acts of your lives. If ye consent and obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land; that is, you shall take of all that he hath that is convenient for you; for then you are married to him in truth, and have an interest in all his goods." Dr. Preston's Church's Carriage.

hand and taking a gift that is offered, is his practical acceptance of the gift. Yea, that act of the foul that is in cleaving to Christ in practice, is itself the most per-

fect coming of the foul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper evidence of trusting in. Christ for falvation. The proper signification of the word trust, according to the more ordinary use of it. both in common speech and in the holy scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person's mind, to run fome venture in practice, or in fomething that he does on the credit of another's fufficiency and faithfulness. And, therefore, the proper evidence of his trusting, is the venture he runs in what he does. He is not properly faid to run any venture, in a dependence on any thing, that does nothing on that dependence, or whose practice is no otherwise than if he had no dependence. For a man to run a venture on a dependence on another, is for him to do something from that dependence by which he feems to expose himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that dependence. And, therefore, it is in complying with the difficulties, and feeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for happiness and life. They depend on fuch promises as that, Mat. x. 39. " He that lofeth his life for my fake, shall find it.' And fo they part with all, and venture their all. in a dependence on Christ's sufficiency and truth. And this is the scripture notion of trusting in Christ, in the excercise of a saving faith in him. Thus Abraham, the father of believers, trusted in Christ, and by faith forfook his own country, in a reliance on the covenant of grace God established with him, Heb. xi. 8. 9. Thus, also 'Moses, by faith refused to be called the fon of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of fin for a season, Heb. xi. 23, &c.? So by faith, others exposed themselves to be stoned and sawn

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in funder, or flain with the fword; 'endured the trial of cruel mockings and fcourgings, bonds and imprisonments, and wandered about in sheep-skins and goatsfkins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.' And in this sense the apostle Paul, by faith, trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole interest, in a dependence on the ability and saithfulness of his Redeemer, under great persecutions, and in sufferings, the loss of all things; 2 Tim. i. 12. For the which cause I also suffer these things; neverstheless I am not ashamed: for I know, whom I have believed, and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that

day.

If a man should have word brought him from the king of a distant island, that he intended to make him his heir, if, upon receiving the tidings, he immediately leaves his native land, and friends, and all that he has in the world, to go to that country, in a dependence on what he hears, then he may be faid to venture himself, and all that he has in the world upon it. But, if he only fits still, and hopes for the promised benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the thoughts of it; he cannot properly be faid to venture himself upon it; he runs no venture in the case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no fuch tidings, by which he would be exposed to any suffering in case all should fail. So he that, on the credit of what he hears of a future world, and, in a dependence on the report of the gospel, concerning life and immortality, forsakes all, or does fo at least, so far as there is occasion, making every thing entirely give place to his eternal interest; he, and he only, may properly be faid to venture himfelf on the report of the gospel. And this is the proper evidence of a true trust in Christ for falvation.

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious love, both to God and men. The texts that plainly teach this, have been so often mentioned already, that it is

meedless to repeat them.

Practice

Practice is the proper evidence of humility. That expression, and manifestation of humility of heart, which God speaks of, as the great expression of it, that he insists on; that we should look upon as the proper expression and manifestation of it: but this is walking humbly; Micah vi. 8. 'He hath shewed thee, O man, 'what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'

This is also the proper evidence of the true fear of God. Prov. viii. 13. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Come, ye children, hear-ken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.—Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile: depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. Prov. iii. 7. Fear the Lord, and depart from evil. Prov. xvi. 6. By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil. Job i. 8. Hast thou considered my servant Job,—a persect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? chap.
ii. 3. Hast thou considered my servant Job,—a persect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him. Psal. xxxvi. 1.

4 There is no fear of God before his eyes."

So practice, in rendering again according to benefits received, is the proper evidence of true thankfulness. Psak cxvi. 12 'What shall I render to the Lord for all 'his benefits towards me? 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. But He-zekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.' Paying our vows unto God, and ordering our conversation aright, seem to be spoken of as the proper expression and evidence of true thankfulness, in the 50th Psalm, ver. 14. 'Offer unto God' thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the most High. 'ver. 23. Wholo offereth praise, glorisieth me: and to 'him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God.'

So the proper evidence of gracious desires and longings, and that which distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is, that they are not idle wishes and wouldings like Balaam's, but effectual in practice to stir up persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the things they long for. Psal. xxvii. 4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after. Psal. lxiii. 1. 2. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee in a dry and thirsteth for thee, my sless longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see thy power and thy glory. Ver. 8. My soul followeth hard after thee. Cant. i. 4. Draw me, we will run after thee.

Practice is the proper evidence of a gracious hope. I John iii. 3. 'Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.' Patient continuance in well-doing, through the difficulties and trials of the Christian course, is often mentioned as the proper expression and fruit of a Christian hope; I Thest, i. 3. Remembering without ceafing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope. 1 Pet. i. 13. 14. Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be fober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obed ent children, &c. Pfal. cxix. 166. Lord, I have hoped in thy falvation, and done thy commandments. 'Pfal. lxxviii. 7. That they might fet their hope in God, and not forget the works of the Lord, but keep his commandments.'

A chearful practice of our duty, and doing the will of God, is the proper evidence of a truly holy joy. Isa. Ixiv. 5. 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness. Psal. cxix. 111. 112. Thy testimonies have I taken for my heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even to the end. Ver. 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. 2 Cor. viii. 2.

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The abundance of their joy abounded unto the riches of their liberality.'

Practice also is the proper evidence of Christian fortitude. The trial of a good soldier is not in his chimney-corner, but in the field of battle; I Cor. ix. 25. 26.

2 Tim. ii. 3. 4. 5.

And, as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace, so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the furest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretences persons may make to great discoveries, great love and joys, they are no further to be regarded than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that does not hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly meafured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a very ill, natural temper, as another. Altho? a person of such a temper will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace as another, the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great; because a person of a good natural temper did not behave himself so ill before conversion.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is the chief of all the signs of saving grace. And, before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly in answer to two objections, that may possibly be made by some against what has been said upon this head.

Objection I. Some may be ready to fay, this feems to be contrary to that opinion, so much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state, chiefly by their inward experience, and that spiritual experiences are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, It is, doubtless, a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should Qq chiesly

chiefly judge of their state by their experience. But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all contrary to that opinion. The chief fign of grace to the consciences of Christians, being Christian practice, in the fense that has been explained, and according to what has been shewn to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with Christian experience being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is spiritual practice; and that is not the motion of a body that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: but spiritual practice in man is the practice of a spirit and body jointly, or the practice of a spirit animating, commanding, and actuating a body to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And, therefore, the main thing, in this holy practice, is the holy acts of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Christian practice, only fecondarily, and as they are dependent and consequent on the acts of the foul. The exercifes of grace that Christians find, or, are conscious to within themfelves, are what they experience within themfelves; and herein therefore lies Christian experience; and this Christian experience consists as much in those operative exercises of grace in the will, that are immediately concerned in the management of the behaviour of the body, as in other exercises. These inward exercises are not the less a part of Christian experience, because they have outward behaviour immediately connected with them. A strong act of love to God, is not the less a part of spiritual experience, because it is the act that immediately produces and effects some selfdenying and expensive outward action, which is much to the honour and glory of God.

To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed, all Christian experience is not properly called practice, but all Christian practice is properly experience.

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And the distinction that is made between them, is not only an unreasonable, but an unscriptural distinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Christian experience; and both reason and scripture represent it as the chief, and most important, and most distinguishing part So it is represented in Jer. xxii. 15. 16. 'Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice in judgment?—He judged the cause of the poor and needy: was not this to know me, faith the Lord? Our inward acquaintance with God furely belongs to the head of experimental religion; but this God represents as confifting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exercises of those graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion; but these the scripture represents as confisting chiefly in practice, in those forementioned texts; 1 John v. 3. 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. 2 John 6. This is love, that we walk after his commandments. Pfal. xxxiv. 11,&c. Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord:—Depart from evil, and do good.' Such experiences as these Hezekiah took comfort in chiefly on his fick-bed, when he faid, 'Remember, O Lord, I befeech thee, how I have walked before thee in 'truth, and with a perfect heart.' And fuch experiences as thefe, the Pfalmist chiefly infists upon, in the 119th Pfalm, and elsewhere.

Such experiences as these the apostle Paul mainly infilts upon, when he fpeaks of his experiences in his epistles; as Rom. i. 9. 'God is my witness, whom I ' ferve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.—2 Cor. i. 12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. Chap. iv. 13. We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak. Chap. v. 7. We walk by faith, not by fight. Ver. 14. The love of Christ conftraineth us. Chap. vi. 4.—7. In all things approving 'ourselves

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ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labours, in watchings, in fastings. By pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the the power of God. Gal. ii. 20. I am "crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God. Phil. iii. 7. 8. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lofs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung 'that I may win Christ. Col. i. 29. Whereunto I also abour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. 1 Theff. ii. 2. We were bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. Ver. 8. 9. 10. Being affectionately defirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own fouls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel, labouring night and day.---Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved our-"felves among you." And fuch experiences as these they were, that this bleffed apostle chiefly comforted himfelf in the confideration of, when he was going to martyrdom, 2 Tim. iv. 6. 7. 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, · I have kept the faith.

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that fort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice confists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of experimental religion. For, that experience, which is in these exercises of grace, that are found and prove effectual at the very point of trial, wherein God proves, which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts are, as has been shown

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already, the proper experiment of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found by experience. This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual experience and trial, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy, which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact, so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions to the like test.

There is a fort of external religious practice, wherein is no inward experience, which no account is made of in the fight of God, but it is esteemed good for no-And there is what is called experience, that is without practice, being neither accompanied nor followed with a Christian behaviour; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience and spiritual light and dis-Whenever a person finds within him an heart to treat God as God, at the time that he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have, at such a time, that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercifes. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet, those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been faid, contrary to what is afferted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of

grace. For that doth not hinder, but that these operalive, productive acts, those exercises of grace that are effectual in practice, may be the highest evidences above all other kinds of acts of grace. Nor does it hinder, but that, when there are many of these acts and exercifes, following one another in a course, under various trials of every kind, the evidence is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man, once by feeing his neighbour, may have good evidence of his prefence; but by feeing him from day to day, and conversing with him, in a course in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples, when they first faw Christ, after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive; but, by converfing with him for forty days, and his shewing himself to them alive, by many infallible proofs, they had yet higher evidence *.

The witness or seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtless consists in the effect of the Spirit of God in the heart, in the implantation and exercises of grace there, and so consists in experience. And it is also beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit, is the highest kind of evidence of the saints adoption, that ever

* " The more these visible exercises of grace are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently these actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your affurance will be. A man that has been affured of fuch visible exercises of grace, may quickly after be in doubt whether he was not mistaken. But when such actings are renewed again and again, he grows more fettled and established about his good estate. If a man see a thing once, that makes him sure; but, if afterwards, he fear he was deceived, when he comes to fee it again, he is more fure he was not mistaken. If a man read such passages in a book, he is fure it is fo. Some months after, some may bear him down, that he was mistaken, so as to make him question it himfelf; but, when he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The more mens grace is multiplied, the more their peace is multiplied;" 2 Pet. i. 2. " Grace and " peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and Jefus our Lord." Stodard's Way to know fincerify and hypocrify.

they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, that have been spoken of, God gives witness, and fers to his feal, in the most conspicuous, eminent, and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church, that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest and most joyful evidences to his faints of their fonship, in those effectual exercises of grace under trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full affurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to that, I Pet. iv. 14. ' If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you.' And that in Rom. v. 2. 3. ' We rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and glory in tribulations.' And agreeable to what the apostle Paul often declares of what he experienced in his trials. And when the apostle Peter, in my text, speaks of the joy unspeakable, and full of glory, which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienced; he has respect to what they found under perfecution, as appears by the context. Christ's thus manifesting himself, as the friend and faviour of his faints, cleaving to him under trials, feems to have been reprefented of old, by his coming and manifelting himfelf, to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the furnace. And when the apostle speaks of the witness of the Spirit, in Rom. viii. 15. 16. 17. he has a more immediate respect to what the Christians experienced, in their exercises of love to God, in suffering persecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verles, encouraging the Christian Romans under their sufferings, that though their bodies be dead, because of fin, yet they should be raised to life again. But it is more especially plain by the verse immediately following, ver. 18. ' For I reckon, that the fufferings of this prefent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' So the apostle has evidently respect to their persecutions, in all that he fays to the end of the chapter. So when the apostle speaks

of the earnest of the Spirit, which God had given to him, in 2 Cor. v. 5. the context shews plainly that he has respect to what was given him in his great trials and sufferings. And in that promise of the white stone, and new name, to him that overcomes, Rev. ii. 17. it is evident Christ has a special respect to a benefit that Christians should obtain, by overcoming, in the trial they had, in that day of persecution. This appears by ver. 13. and many other passages in this epistle to the seven churches of Asia.

Object. 2. Some also may be ready to object against what has been said of Christian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a legal doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of such great importance in religion, magnifies works, and tends to lead men to make too much of their own doings, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not feem well to consist with that great gospel-doc-

trine of justification by faith alone.

But this objection is altogether without reason. Which way is it inconfistent with the freeness of God's grace, that holy practice should be a fign of God's grace: It is our works being the price of God's favour, and not their being the fign of it, that is the thing which is inconfiftent with the freeness of that favour. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a fign of the kindness of him who gave it to him, is in no respect inconsistent with the freeness of that kindnefs. It is his having money in his hands as the price of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconfiftent with. the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the freeness of the grace of God to sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not that no holy and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a fruit, and so a fign of that grace; but that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace; that kindness is shown to the unworthy and unlovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the

subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fulness of God's nature, the fulness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification without works, (as this doctrine is taught in the fcripture), that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or any thing in us, which is in any wife accepted with God, as a balance for the guilt of fin, or a recommendation of finners to his acceptance as heirs of Thus we are justified only by the righteousness of Christ, and not by our righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is faid that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or any thing in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our fouls receiving Christ, or adhering to, and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a fign of an interest in Christ.

If the doctrines of free grace, and justification by faith alone, be inconfistent with the importance of holy practice as a fign of grace; then they are equally inconfiftent with the importance of any thing whatfoever in us as a fign of grace, any holinefs, or any grace that is in us, or any of our experiences or religion; for it is as contrary to the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith alone, that any of these should be the righteousness which we are justified by, as that holy practice should be so. It is with holy works, as it is with holy qualifications; it is inconfiftent with the freeness of gospel-grace, that a title to salvation should be given to, men for the loveliness of any of their holy qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the holiness of their works. It is inconsistent with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, that an interest in Christ and his benefits should be given for the loveliness of a man's true, holiness.

holiness, for the amiableness of his renewed, fanctified, heavenly heart, his love to God, and being like God, or his experience of joy in the Holy Ghost, self-emptinels, a spirit to exalt Christ above all, and to give all glory to him, and a heart devoted unto him; I fay, it is inconfiftent with the gospel-doctrine of free grace, that a title to Christ's benefits should be given out of regard to the loveliness of any of these, or that any of these should be our righteousness in the affair of justification. And yet this does not hinder the importance of these things as evidences of an interest in Christ. Just so it To make is with respect to holy actions and works. light of works, because we be not justified by works, is the fame thing in effect, as to make light of all religion, all grace and holiness, yea, true evangelical holiness, and all gracious experience; for all is included, when the scripture fays, we are not justified by works; for by works in this case, is meant all our own righteousness, religion, or holiness, and every thing that is in us, all the good we do, and all the good which we are confcious of, all external acts, and all internal acts and exercifes of grace, and all experiences, and all those holy and heavenly things wherein the life and power, and the very essence of religion do consist, all those great things which Christ and his apostles mainly insisted on in their preaching, and endeavoured to promote, as of the greatest consequence in the hearts and lives of men, and all good dispositions, exercises and qualifications of every kind whatfoever; and even faith itself, considered as a part of our holiness. For we are justified by none of these things; and if we were, we should, in a scripture-sense, be justified by works. And therefore if it be not legal, and contrary to the evangelical doctrine of justification without works, to insist on any of these, as of great importance, as evidences of an interest in Christ; then no more is it thus, to insist on the importance of holy practice. It would be legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies by bringing us to a title to Christ's benefits, as the price of it, or as recommending to it by

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its preciousness or excellence; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy practice justifies the fincerity of a believer, as the proper evidence of it. The apostle james did not think it legal to fay, that Abraham our father was justified by works, in this fense. The Spirit that indited the scripture, did not think the great importance and absolute necessity of holy practice, in this respect, to be inconfistent with the freeness of grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6. 7. God fays, 'I will give unto him that is athirst, of the foun-' tain of the water of life freely;' and then adds, in the very next words, ' he that overcometh shall inherit all things.' As though behaving well in the Christian race and warfare, were the condition of the promise. So in the next chapter, in the 14th and 15th verses, Christ fays, 'Bleffed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city; and then declares in the 15th verse, 'how they that are of a wicked practice' shall be excluded; and yet in the two verses next following, does with very great folemnity give forth an invitation to all to come and take of the water of life freely; 'I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning-star. And the spirit and the bride fay, Come. And let him that heareth, fay, Come. And let him that is athirst, come; and whofoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.' So chap. iii. 20. 21. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with 'him, and he with me.' But then it is added in the next words, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to fit with me in my throne.' And in that great invitation of Christ, Matth. xi. latter end, 'Come unto me, 'all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give 'you rest;' Christ adds in the next words, ' Take my 'yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is eafy, and my burden is light:' as though

though taking the burden of Christ's service, and imitating his example, were necessary in order to the promised rest. So in that great invitation to sinners to accept of free grace; If. lv. ' Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price; even there, in the continuation of the same invitation, the sinner's forsaking his wicked practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining mercy; ver. 7. Let the wicked forfake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' So the riches of divine grace, in the jultification of finners, is fet forth with the necessity of holy practice, Ifa. i. 16, &c. 'Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, re-I lieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, faith the · Lord; though your fins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as fnow; though they be red like crimson, they fhall be as wool.' And in that most solemn invitation of Wisdom, Prov. ix. after it is represented what great provision is made, and how that all things were ready, the house built, the beasts killed, the wine mingled, and the table furnished, and the messengers sent forth to invite the guests; then we have the free invitation, ver. 4. 5. 6. Whofo is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, (i. e. has no righteousness), she faith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.' But then in the next breath it follows, 'forfake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding; as though forfaking fin, and going in the way of holiness, were necessary in order to life. So that the freeness of grace, and the necessity of holy practice, which are thus from time to time joined together in scripture, are not inconsistent one with another. does

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faitl con that nity does it at all diminish the honour and importance of faith, that the exercises and effects of faith in practice, should be esteemed the chief signs of it; any more than it lessens the importance of life, that action and motion

are esteemed the chief signs of that.

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So that in what has been faid of the importance of holy practice as the main fign of fincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the freedom and fovereignty of gospel-grace, nothing in the least clashing with the gospel-doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the works of the law, nothing in the least tending to lessen the glory of the Mediator, and our dependence on his righteousness, nothing infringing on the special prerogatives of faith in the affair of our salvation, nothing in any wife detracting from the glory of God and his mercy, or exalting man, or diminishing his dependence and obligation. So that if any are against such an importance of holy practice as has been spoken of, it must be only from a senseless aversion to the letters and found of the word works; when there is no reason in the world to be given for it, but what may be given with equal force, why they should have an aversion to the words holiness, godliness, grace, religion, experience, and even faith irself; for to make a righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the way of the new covenant, as to make a righteousness of holy practice *.

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[&]quot;"You say you know Christ, and the love and good-will of Christ towards you, and that he is the propitiation for your fins. How do you know this? "he that saith I hnow him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar." I John ii. 4. True, might some reply, he that keeps not the commands of Christ, hath thereby a sure evidence that he knows him not, and that he is not united to him; but is this any evidence that we do know him, and that we are united to him, if we do keep his commandments? Yes verily, saith the apostle, "hereby we do know him, if we keep his commandments." And again, ver. 5. "hereby know we that we are in him." What can be more plain? What a vanity is it to say, that this is running upon a covenant of

It is greatly to the hurt of religion, for perfons to make light of, and infift little on, those things which the scripture infifts most upon, as of most importance in the evidence of our interest in Christ, under a notion that to lay weight on these things is legal, and an old covenant way; and fo, to neglect the exercises, and effectual operations of grace in practice, and infift almost wholly on difcoveries, and the method and manner of the immanent exercises of conscience and grace in contemplation; depending on an ability to make nice distinctions in these matters, and a faculty of accurate differning in them, from philosophy or experience. It is in vain to feek for any better, or any further figns than those that the scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently infisfed on, as figns of godliness. They who pretend to a greater accuracy in gia: · ving figns, or by their extraordinary experience or infight into the nature of things, to give more diftinguishing marks, which shall more thoroughly fearth out, and detect the hypocrite, are but subtile to darken their own minds, and the minds of others; their refinings, and nice differning, are in God's fight, but refined foolishnels and a fagacious delusion. Here are applicable those words of Agur, Prov. xxx. 5. 6. Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to them that pur their trust in him: add thou not unto his words, left he re-* prove thee, and thou be found a liar.' Our wisdom and differning, with regard to the hearts of men, is not much to be trufted. We can fee but a little way into

works?—O beloved, it is a fad thing to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification possibly may be an evidence. May be? Is it not certain? Assuredly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own promises of favour are not sure evidences thereof, and consequently that they are lies and untruths.—Our Saviour, who was no legal preacher, pronounceth, and consequently evidenceth blessedness, by eight or nine promises, expressly made to such persons, as had inherent graces, Matth. v. 3. 4. &c. Shepard's Sound Believer, p. 221. 222. 223.

into the nature of the foul, and the depths of man's heart. The ways are fo many whereby perfons affections may be moved without any supernatural influence, the natural springs of the affections are fo various and fo fecret, fo many things have oftentimes a joint influence on the affections, the imagination, and that in ways innumerable and unfearchable, natural tempereducation, the common influences of the Spirit of God, a furprising concourse of affecting eircumstances, an extraordinary coincidence of things in the course of men's thoughts, together with the fubtile management of invisible malicious spirits, that no philosophy or experience will ever be fufficient to guide us fafely through this labyrinth and maze, without our closely following: the clue which God has given us in his word. God knows his own reasons why he insists on some things, and plainly fets them forth as the things that we should try ourfelves by rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these things are attended with less perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others. He best knows our nature and he knows the nature and manner of his own operations; and he best knows the way of our fafety; he knows what allowances to make for different states of his church, and different tempers of particular persons." and varieties in the manner of his own operations; how far nature may refemble grace, and how far nature may be mixed with grace, what affections may rife from imagination, and how far imagination may be mixed with spiritual illumination. And, therefore, it is our wisdom not to take his work out of his hands, but to follow him, and lay the stress of the judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise. no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded, and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the way of look? ing chiefly at those things, which Christ and his apolfiles and prophets chiefly infifted on, and fo in judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding practical exercifes and effects of grace, not neglecting other things; it would be of manifold happy consequence; it would,

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above all things, tend to the conviction of deluded bypocrites, and to prevent the delufion of those whose hearts were never brought to a thorough compliance with the strait and narrow way which leads to life; it would tend to deliver us from innumerable perplexities, arifing from the various inconfiftent schemes there are about methods and steps of experience; it would greatly tend to prevent professors neglecting strictness of life, and tend to promote their engagedness and earnestness in their Christian walk; and it would become fashionable for men to shew their Christianity, more by an amiable diffinguished behaviour, than by an abundant and excessive declaring their experiences; and we should get into the way of appearing lively in religion, more by being lively in the fervice of God and our generation, than by the liveliness and forwardness of our tongues, and making a bufiness of proclaiming on the house-tops, with our mouths, the holy and eminent acts and exercifes of our own hearts; and Christians that are intimate friends, would talk together of their experiences and comforts, in a manner better becoming Christian humility and modelty, and more to each others profit; their tongues not running before, but rather going behind their hands and feet, after the prudent example of the bleffed apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 6.; and many occasions of spiritual pride would be cut off; and so a great door shut against the devil; and a great many of the main stumbling-blocks against experimental and powerful religion would be removed; and religion would be declared and manifested in fuch a way that, instead of hardening spectators, and exceedingly promoting infidelity and atheifm, would, above all things, tend to convince men that there is a reality in religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their consciences of the importance and excellency of religion. Thus the light of profesiors would so shine before men, that others, feeing their good works, would glorify their Father which is in heaven.

THE END.

